

# EMPIRE

RANDOM RECOLLECTION

By Stanley G. Smith

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

W980 Wide Faints and Margins

W981 Narrow Faints and Margins







# RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS

- 1 Heine Fisher's restaurant
- 2 Rice Hoge's do.
- 3 Bidley & Crabo's do.
- 4 Jake Hepp do.
- 5 Mother Paul's do.
- 6 Peacock's do.
- 7 Ritter Shop
- 8 Creamery
- 9 Thorpe's Carriage Works
- 10 Eaton Plow Works
- 11 Gruner's Store
- 12 Martin & Polly Coal Mine
- 13 Cooper Shop
- 14 Dipple Sausage
- 15 Dunn Shoe Shop
- 16 Wagner Cigar Shop
- 17 Perfect Crime ?
- 18 Livery Stable Chambermaid ( Billy Borden)
- 19 Cheyenne Charley
- 20 Hotel Runner (Jake Hodge)
- 21 Tattoo Artist (Eddie Watkins) Dec 24
- 22
- 23 Mill Pick Dresser (Sam Phipps)
- 24 Lester Jenner (Capt. Elliott)
- 25 The Dog Buyer
- 26 Let's Go Swimmin'
- 27 Electric Lights
- 28 Walnut Street Fire
- 29 Old Bismarck (Gus Wangelin)
- 30 Early Returns (1896 Election)
- 31 "And there was light." (1893) 3/0
- 32 Murphy Comedy Co. (PBS)
- 33 Fire Department Milestones
- 34 The Judge and the Governor.
- 35
- 36 Paul's Concert Band
- 37 Board for Vergennes --4th of July picnic)
- 38 "Chicken Lifter" (Doc Bigby, L.L. Stierwalt)
- 39 Back to Walnut Street (Post-office)
- 40 The Best in Town. (Mike Mentel)
- 41 Advocate-- (Baxter and Parker)
- 42 He went about doing good. (Hiram L. Williamson)



# PERRY COUNTY ADVOCATE

ROBERT W. KLINGER, Editor  
W. W. VINEYARD, Editor Emeritus  
MRS. L. J. MCDONALD and H. R. STANTON, Publishers  
PHONE 4516

Published each Thursday for 51 weeks at 15 West Side of Square,  
Entered as second class matter in the Post Office at Pinckneyville,  
Illinois, under the Acts of March 3, 1879.

## SUBSCRIPTION

In Perry County \$2.00 per year, in advance; \$2.50 per year if not  
in advance. Outside of Perry County \$3.00 per year in advance.

## ADVERTISING RATES

Local Foreign and Political Advertising Rates will be given on  
request.

## Random Recollection

OF

7/30/59

STANLEY G. SMITH

About the time a billboard poster portrayed Wm. McKinley as a full dinner pail, at Davison's horselot, where Dunns' paint store now stands, Heinie started a restaurant. It differed somewhat, perhaps more, from Luke's or any present day establishment.

The building it occupied was designed and constructed by local talent. In the plans, it closely approximated the dimensions and adapted the classic lines of a pre W. P. A. three-holer. It lacked the sawed out star or crescent in the end. The facade was severed, midway, so that the upper half, hinged, could be swung downward, forming a 90 degree angle with the wall, and a counter for serving customers. Patrons remained outside. The inner rear wall came equipped with a narrow shelf. It provided space for the equipment—nickle-plated weener can, a reeking gasoline burner, coffee grinder and a three-gallon coffee pot, soon smoke stained externally and encrusted internally.

Above this shelf, up near the roof, a few nails were provided to store the inventory—a six-bit bunch of weeners. That, plus up to perhaps two dozen buns, a package or so of XXXX, Lion's Head or Arbuckles coffee, would complete the stock in trade. Oh yes, a jar of mustard, complete with paddle whittled from a cedar shingle. That, with a bucket of water from the clankety-clank iron pump in front of "Bess" Campbell's, now Pillers Drug Store, and Heinie was in business. Research into the density and thickness of the seum on the mustard might reveal the volume of patronage enjoyed.

This business was migratory. The structure had a pair of wheels, remnants of some discarded hayrake. It had a gaspipe handle. Up unto that of a baby carriage, only more substantial. On occasions such as July 4, soldiers' reunions or the fair, it was laboriously trundled over dusty streets to the fairgrounds, to meet bigtime competition.

The usual habitat of this operation was where the First National Bank now stands. It is hard to recall just what that lot looked like then. A real card-carrying writer would say it was "shrouded in the mists of antiquity." It seems like the space was wider then. That may be because the brick sidewalks were narrow. Viewpoints change. Kunze opera house, when built, seemed as big as the Arena in St. Louis.

Part of the lot was smooth enough to form a Grade-A marble ground, and was so utilized, landscaping, or vegetation ornamenting the borders of the area, featured spreading patches of dogfennel interspersed with growths of burdock. A few discarded foundation blocks of sandstone were scattered 'round about. They were good for sharpening slate pencils. Shattered flasks created hazards for barefoot boys who searched for lost peewees in the vegetation.

A smooth, wide path bisected the area on the tornado angle, southwest to northeast. It connected the front of the building Tom Lee's barbershop occupied and--was it the Alex. McCann grocery

or "Candy Jim" Waldrop's confectionery? "Candy Jim," according to tradition, pyraminded a borrowed fourbits worth of sugar, to make his first batch of candy, into a then comfortable estate.

When Heinie held forth there, it was the custom of the late Father Schneider to pass that way on his evening strolls among his parishioners and other friends. He had many. With all the dignity of a man of the cloth, the good padre always enjoyed his little jokes. One evening, the good Father found the food emporium unattended. Heinie was having a hot run of his prize agate in a nearby marble game. The king-size umbrella the stalwart Father carried, perhaps for added dignity, came in handy that day. With it, the sedate dignitary unhooked the bunch of weeners from the wall. Heinie saw his merchandise suspended from the shouldered umbrella. It was like a comic picture bum's bandana bundle. His good friend the Father strode nonchalantly away.

It took a lot of pleading, but the merchandise was duly returned to stock, and Father Schneider stood the treats for all.

Tune in next week for the Hamburger Specialist, Rice Hoge.



# Random Recollection (2)

OF

8/16/59

STANLEY G. SMITH

Around the first decade of this century, Rice Hoge was a name to conger with in the local restaurant industry. He would operate a thriving business at one location, sell out, and start again elsewhere. Before his restaurant career, Hoge ran a saloon in the old Scherle brick. Real old timers called it the Birkner building, at Douglas and Parker streets. Little boys had no business on that corner. They just passed by. For sport, Hoge had a greyhound trained for speed. He frequently ran "against the clock" on Douglas street, from Dipple's butcher shop to the bar room corner. Sportive minded patrons bet the drinks on the elapsed time. That helped business.

Hoge's restaurants, at divers times, occupied various Walnut street locations; from a spot just north of Thorp's carriage works to one adjacent to the old Carter house. (Interpretation--from Noward's garage to a building south of Brown's, formerly Niesing's store.)

Rice Hoge kept his places clean. But, he too operated without fans. He functioned when no power plant did. His was just another of the stool-and-counter places, (tables-for-ladies.) Seasonally, he turned out fried oysters that were just the proper hue of golden brown. His stews not only tasted right, but some customers made them sound delicious. Oysters, in those days, came in Meletio's tubs, painted a circus blue. It was customary to set the tub out front, primarily for natural refrigeration, and incidentally, for advertising purposes.

Mrs. Hoge could weld a fancy assortment of home baked pies. But, as in any business, supply and demand were unbalanced at times. They tell of the time that all the pies were gone except a few of the raisin or "brakeman" variety. Tipped off to this, a group of playful customers lined up at the counter and demanded varieties such as pineapple, raspberry, banana, gooseberry, chocolate, etc. Hoge skidded a plain old raisin pie in front of each and called them the kinds that had been ordered. That avoided trouble such as started when one bean jockey answered the "what-kind-pie" query, "Pie pie you so-and-so--wanta ham sandwich?"

And, another time, the pumpkin pie had lingered much too long upon the shelf. A customer bought a cut of one, and too soon began to compliment Mrs. Hoge on her pie-baking skill. That piece of pie fitted neatly into a big manila envelope in a hungry printer's top coat pocket, but Mrs. Hoge was not chagrined. It was worth the nickle.

Hoge concocted a hamburger that brought him local fame. Rolled cracker crumbs and chopped onions substituted for a portion of the beef required to form a pat that oozed well out beyond the bun's perimeter. They cost five cents, six for two-bits, carried out. Hoge

frowned upon the lavish use of catsup. But, like others of that period, he provided pepper sauce--bottle of rat-tail shaped red peppers in vinegar, with a V cut in the cork.

These restaurant reminiscences bring up to many that-reminds-mes. Tom Baxter, who ran The Democrat, was Hoge's brother-in-law. He rated credit with Hoge, and used it to feed transient employees. Baxter called them "Touring Exponents of The Art Preservative of All Art." In common parlance, they were just tramp printers--a colorful breed, now extinct, of which more should be recorded.

During one of Baxter's frequent incapacitations, the force sorely needed help. One of the force, straggling to work that morning, saw a stranger hurrying out of Hoge's. He carried a paper bag that showed oil stains suggestive of two-bits worth of hamburgers. One who associated with that extinct species, the tramp printer, could pick one out of a crowd like spotting an Ayershire cow among a

angus cattle. The man with the sandwiches had all the employee, who reported earlier, said a print had called; and before he worked, and had received an order on Hoge's for his breakfast. Turns of the paper were probably "plated out" that issue. aimess to members of the craft, no other, among scores encountered, stands charged with any dishonorable act. Next Week--Joe Biddle and Crabo on The Levee.



## Random Recollection (3)

OF

8/13/59

STANLEY G. SMITH

Visibility, in aviation nomenclature, pertains to the distance one can see. Acoustics have to do with the way sounds carry. The word, if any, meaning measurement of smells, or facilities for their development, retention and dissemination, escapes me. Fragrance, to some, may be a stench to others.

Unventilated restaurants, not normal now, formerly proclaimed unmistakably, their location and identity. One of these that is recalled as placing greatest accent on the odor was in the old Miller, Mueller or maybe Moekel building on the levee. There were two of the Mueller boys--Joe, known as "Joe Biddley," and Frank, called "Crabo." They operated in the then rather rundown building that Wallace Peacock replaced. Lee Opp holds forth there now. On sultry summer evenings or when the oversize Round Oak stove glowed red, the kitchen was obviously close, and unwind.

Maybe they boiled cabbage, turnips and onions longer than at other places. It may be that a modern food inspector would have thrown a fit of screaming meemies. It just seems like it smelled the most--inviting or repelling, depending upon the smelen.

Customers liked the place, and "Biddley" and "Crabo". The elite, in for a late snack after a dance in Kunze opera house might meet, at an adjoining stool, a booming bridge carpenter or brakeman slurping up a can of raw tomatoes to overcome a lapse in sobriety. The place was not far from the Windsor bar. It was somewhat farther from the bar to "Biddley's." This is correct if the geometry was right when it observed that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points.

Duncan Hines, if around then, might have withheld his sanction. If Emily Post ever mounted any of the squeaking stools and observed and listened to some table manners in vogue there, she might have raised an eyebrow slightly. The potent homemade soup evoked appreciative, slivering sounds and blurps of sheer satisfaction. Coffee was saucered in like manner.

This favorite retreat was also a music center. Joe played baritone in the band, and appreciated music. So did the customers who volantly cranked up the old Edison phonograph. It had a horn as

long as your arm, and played waxed cones, about tomato can size. The repertoire was limited. On the hit parade, two are recalled. A gay waltz number, "Under the Anhauser Busch," worked in some "Och delieber," and carried a refrain about making eyes mit me under the said "busch." Harry Carey gets paid for such promotional performances now. The other fit the mood of a crying drunk--"Down in The City of Sighs and Tears." It was a tear jerker, with a sob. It was something about someone who, like the celebrated "Our Nell," hadn't been done right by. Sad,

It sounded even sadder when the cranker neglected his crank. The tempo slowed and the music whined slowly to the end of the heart-breaking ballad. But, it was played until the diamond mined the grooves too deep to register.

"Good old days"? My preference is for ventilated, sanitary coffee sanctuaries, even if someone does start up the juke box.

Next week--Let's go to Jake Hepp's.



# Random Recollection (4)

OF

STANLEY G. SMITH

Jake Hepp's place included, among other features, a lunch room of sorts. It was also a delicatessen, a "heimgemacht" icecream parlor, a confectionery, and, as a store, his stock was highly diversified--mostly luxuries.

A 2-col. 10in. add ran in a local paper, unchanged, until a printer would say the type was worn down to the second nich. It listed, in several short slanting columns, such items as "fancy groceries, toys, dolls, games, books, stationery, school supplies--." You name it, he had it. When the advertisement was finally discontinued, some printer slipped it onto a job galley, tied a string around it, and hung it on the wall. It remained there, near where the towel was nailed, until, in a cleanup for trade-in type metal, it went into the 'lbox. (Well, old prints would like that line, anyway.)

Jake would wield a well honed butcher knife and come up with a cheese, boiled ham or sausage sandwich that was satisfying. His stock, he said, included summer sausage and some are not sausage. He had that sort of wit. Charlie Bischof could reel off scores of yarns about Jake Hepp, and impersonate the dialect that carried a trace of the "Old Country." He could record them.

Icecream, served in the two parlors in the rear of the store, was of Hepp's own make. Much of the ice that froze it was a local product. It came from nature's own ice plant, "Creamery Pond," in Hincke's pasture. He had a storage house for ice on what was then called "Clabber Alley." Maps now call it Murphy St. It was south of Bill Duncan's horse lot, now the hospital's parking area.

Another storage place was provided in front of the store. It was a pit, extending into the street, and was covered with a red, frame, sawdust insulated structure. This was about pool-table size, and just high enough to sit on comfortably, in the afternoon shade. Opinions, if not knowledge of free trade and a high protective tariff; the gold standard and the free and unlimited coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1 were thoroughly discussed there.

When a new batch of icecream was in demand, Jake trundled

out a freezer of gigantic proportions. This was a hand operated job, and it took a lot of energy to keep it turning as the job neared completion. Freezer turners were selected from volunteers. The reward was a 10¢ dipper of the product. He was never short of help.

The two parlors marked a distinction in the classes of patronage the place enjoyed. The south one had oilcloth on the floor. Chairs and tables were more ornate. That room was for the elite--young men about town who could spend two bits on the lady friend. The other was more for the common herd. A man in overalls felt more at home there. Youngsters, short on funds, invading the

"ladies parlor," were chased out as "two-fer-a-nickel scaliwags," or worse.

Along with the home made icecream, Hepp's place boasted a soda fountain, resplendent in marble and nickel plate--perhaps the first around here. At times, they took it to the fair and had a stand in a booth under the grandstand at the north turn of the track. A treat at Hepp's, to some then, rated about like a trip to Travelers' or Tom's Place today.

For a cold snack at home on Sunday evenings, neatly sliced brick cheese, boiled ham or bologna, maybe a bit extravagant for the frugal, could not be found elsewhere. When the time came to cook up a few gallons of mincemeat for winter pies, the hunk of candied citron that went into it was sure to come from Hepp's. So was the ornamental sugar sprinkled sparingly on cakes and cookies baked for special occasions. Hepp had it in a row of candy bars. It came in assorted vivid colors. That was really "putting on the dog".

Hepp's stock of candy was always something to behold. The penny kinds, and yard-long whips of licorice attracted the juvenile trade. Youths, in time, grew into customers for expensive boxed candy. Hepp exercised patience while little tots pondered weighty decisions concerning the allotment of pennies to merit their continued patronage when they had dollars to spend.

The gifts and other specialties displayed there enabled the selection of a deluxe edition of The Holy Bible or a pair of big, red, round-cornered dice. Toys, dolls and assorted fireworks, were, by their nature, featured seasonally. A window stacked with fireworks in June was normal. The stock ranged from expensive skyrockets, bundles of a dozen Roman candles, boxes of bombs to burst on sidewalks and firecrackers, from the giant sizes down to five cent packs with Chinese labels.

Tradition has it that Hepp had one call for a big firecracker entirely out of season. Jeff King was keeper of the county jail. A prisoner charged with murder languished there. A special guard, or "death watch" was on duty. Inspection convinced Jeff the guard had tarried too long at the wine. His chair was tilted comfortably against the wall, and snores echoed thru the corridors.

Jeff went to Hepp's and called for the biggest, loudest firecracker in stock. Jake wanted to know why in hell he wanted it so long after the Fourth, Jeff explained. The giant cracker was "on the house," and Jake helped Jeff enjoy the guard's awakening. Folks had fun in the old day.

---Tune in next week---"Mother" Paul's place.



5

8/27/59 (5)

## Random Recollection

OF

STANLEY G. SMITH

"Mother" Paul's place, where the Sherman House now flourishes, seldom if ever served lobster or three dollar steaks. Youngsters, with a few thin dimes to spend, predominated the patronage. Freak lunches were not common there. A saucer full of sardines and sliced onions might be favored by some. To satisfy an appetite for canned pork and beans, two patrons of like mind were needed. It did not come in individual servings. An invitation to "split a bean" was a common occurrence.

And, at times, eating contests were conducted. They might be tests of capacity for pies, with the one who ate the fewest picking up the check, or races to determine who could eat the fastest. No rules on table manners were in force. It is recalled that the customer who set the record in banana eating required medical attention. Some held that the mark was therefore unofficial, but nothing was done about it.

No one would have called the place a gambling den, but it was the home of the one-to-ten cent raffle. The enterprising youngsters who was first to notice that the assembled patrons were ripe for a little financial action ran the game. He numbered ten slips of paper, one to ten and put them in a hat. Hats were worn then. Players drawing slips paid the number of cents the slip indicated. If less than ten participated, the ones that drew the lowest numbers repeated. The plutocrat that ran the game released the winning number and paid off two-bits. That gave him 30¢ more to spend.

At one time, a tobacco chewing contest was conducted. The lad who could convert a dime cut of Star into a cud first was the winner. For some reason, this test was made an outdoor sport. Contestants were required to stand out on the walk, near the curb. That, too, was considered fun.

Where youngsters gather, the unusual may occur. Pinckneyville Dramatic Club flourished in that era. It had club rooms above The Democrat shop, where Spencer Gilly has his store today. Some of the furnishings for the dramatic headquarters were improvised from the remnants of some undertaker's stock-in-trade. Coffin boxes,

properly trimmed and cushioned, made right nice settees. The discovery, one night, of a nice, unused casket, jockey size, inspired the enactment of a funeral.

There were enough amateur actors assembled to pick a cast of characters. No rehearsal was required. The "corps" was selected, not for talent but by weight, or the lack of it. Out of regard for the safety of life and limb of the "dead," he had to walk down stairs. On the street, the cortege formed in due solemnity--preacher, undertaker, the pallbearers and assorted mourners, with the "body"

in the delux potter's field model coffin, and proceeded around the square to Paul's. It was about time to go there anyway, before the place was closed.

Counter stools supported "the remains," while the others in the party, bearing up as bravely as they could, stoically munched their hamburgers. The "departed" recovered sufficiently to sit up and take on a cup of coffee. Fortified, at least by the refreshments, the cortege reformed and wended its doleful way back to the club rooms. And, "the dead" had to arise and walk back up the stairs. Lazy pallbearers.



# Random Recollection (6)

OF

9/3/59

## STANLEY G. SMITH

Wallace Peacock once proudly wore the uniform of a Van Noy news butch. Before that army of roving vendors disbanded, he stepped out of uniform, put on a clean white apron and opened a restaurant in "The Wedge," an old landmark now departed from the scene down on "the levee."

Having lugged a steaming weenie can thru crowded isles of swaying coaches many years, Peacock was allergic to anything in the hotdog line and refused to serve them. But, shortorders, sandwiches, pies and barrels of coffee were always available. To illustrate the continuity of service, neither "Little Heinie" Sledger nor Edwin Hall could find a key to close up on the night of the Pan-American Circus riot.

That riot is another story. So is the origin of "the levee" where there is no waterfront. Both "Little Heinie" and Edwin would serve as subjects of colorful character sketches, but let's get back to Peacock's.

Peacock's would not have been the same without these two, or without Ira Sledger and Roy, (Red) Eaton. "Red" could slide a mug of coffee precisely to any designated spot on the long counter and never spill a drop. He could flip hot cakes to the ceiling and catch them, right side up without a miss.

Passenger traffic in the inter-change of this then Eldorado district terminal now seems incredible. Hungry passengers crowded the place for hurried lunches while coaches were switched to outbound trains.

Railroaders thronged the place at any hour. They got quick service if needed. Or, they might have time to tarry. When Edwin Hall was chef, an entire crew or more might all order, in rotation, a bowl of cream gravy. Along with the delivery of the gravy from the kitchen, came Edwin's report: "Here's yer ----- cream gravy - Hope it chokes the -----." Some held the belief that Edwin was not enthusiastic about the task of concocting cream gravy.

Brakemen made faster flying switches and hogheads pulled more tonnage in Peacocks than on the rails, according to Ira Sledger,

who had to hear many hours of conversation. He tired of the talk one night and set some flagman's red light at the end of the counter, just for protection from a wild cut of cars.

A staff of competent cooks baked pies for Peacock. They were the saucer size, five-cent variety. Restaurant pies today are mostly wedges of some custardy goo, piled high with foam. Railroad pies were more substantial. Such as were made "open-faced," without an upper crust, were for counter consumption. Peacock supplied rail passengers with lunch "to go," and supplied the passing crews. Top crusted, or "hunting case" pies were welded substantially. A

sack of them, if perchance, banged up against the halfmoon on a crummy, suffered no serious damage. Coffee went along in quart size pails. Peacock had them scattered from East St. Louis to Mounds, then the southern terminal for freight trains connecting East St. Louis and the South.

Business flourished in "the wedge." Ed. Fisher's property then, for many years. Peacock then erected his own building, just north across Parker street. He had more rooms for rent upstairs.

At one time, Wallace changed his ways. He quit cigarettes. And, altho he sold them, customers were not permitted to smoke them in his restaurant. Some outspoken customer held that this was inconsistent. Wallace retorted that a druggist would sell his castor oil, but that a specified result, consequent to its consumption, in the store, might be objectionable.

World War I brought shortages and advancing prices. Peacock coped with these adverse conditions and survived. On the cigar case, he had a match vending machine. It had upright slots for the standard penny boxes of matches. Pennies, inserted in a coin slot, and pressure on a little lever, discharged the boxes from each of the six slots in rotation. If one slot was empty, an added coin would permit the lever to eject a box from the next one. Match prices advanced, a little. Peacock filled only alternate slots in this machine. It took two cents to buy matches.

One price conscious, if not penurious customer, revolted. He took his penny, walked the mile "uptown," and returned with a box that cost only one cent. He pecked on the window and displayed his purchase upon his return.

A five-cent advance in the price of an icecream soda was attributed to an advance in the cost of a drum of gas. An effort to calculate how many drinks a drum of gas would fize up was unsuccessful. No one knew how long it had been since the last one had been installed.

Wartime sugar was doled out in stingy envelopes--inadequate for a cup of coffee as some like it. A regular customer felt the urge, at times, for an order that one waitress termed "pie-a-la mess." The formula called for apple pie, a scant glass of milk and an abundant charge of granulated sugar. The system needs some sugar.

This then hard-working patron was asked by Peacock, "Name yer prizen--" one of Peacock's pet expressions. He was told that the immediate craving was for apple pie, with some milk and a lot of sugar, in a bowl, but due to restrictions, just pie-and would have have to do.

No other customers were present. A cereal bowl, the pie and milk appeared forthwith. From beneath the counter, a bowl of the then compound sugar followed. Peacock explained that anyone who drank so many cups of coffee, as it came from the urn, was entitled to a ton of sugar if he wanted it. And may he rest in peace.



# Random Recollection

OF

STANLEY G. SMITH

Many little local industries have flourished on and faded from the scene since the so-called "Gay Nineties." Demands for some products of the master craftsmen they employed declined. Hand-made products of old time artisans have been replaced by mass production and automation. Master salesmanship would be required to market them successfully today.

Carpenters, who had no power tools, operated their own planing mills. The "Gingerbread" period of front porch adornment, of which some traces remain, called for artistry in design and for muscular energy in execution. Some were stocked or ordered by the lumber dealers. Master builders fashioned their own.

Of these ingenious and artistic craftsmen, the late George Ritter, (not "Pete", his father,) is recalled as one who had a little factory that was all his own. This plant, old timers will recall, was just north of "The Charleton House", where the ice plant stands today. It went beyond the fancy finishing for the better homes erected in that era.

When this little factory was going strong, Beaucoup water needed stirring to get all of it to run out of a glass. Cistern water, running off of soot stained cedar shingle roofs, might look too much like weak tea. So--Ritter perfected a filter. It was a rectangular affair, about the size of a steamer trunk, supported on squat, slanting, wooden legs. What he had in it to make it work was Ritter's secret, probably patented. Anyway, it did the job. Owners of the better homes had them installed at outlets of downspouts which otherwise discharged the flow directly into the cisterns. Clean, cool, cistern water was the desired result.

Another product of this shop was Ritter's Patent Ironing Board. Some may still be in operation. The board itself was one big solid walnut slab. Patented features were in the supporting framework. The ingenious arrangement whereby the legs locked into place for operation gave this product its distinction from competing models. It was claimed that a Ritter ironing board would wiggle with the motion of the iron about the time that the Rock of Gibraltar began to sway in summer breezes.

How many other ingenious devices Ritter perfected, manufactured and marketed would be hard to recall. Monuments made of concrete would be included in the list. Sales literature said that patent office examiners agreed that these Pinckneyville made tombstones would last as long as granite, which should be about long enough. Hollow-wall building blocks the Ritters made and laid about a half-century ago, are still improving in durability, and have lost little in appearance.

All these products, and others, were made the hard way. Time, patience, skill, inventive ingenuity or "know-how," had to be supplemented by muscular exertion--just plain l-a-b-o-r. The object was to do the job so as to get the best results in lasting quality.

A craftsman of the Ritter type could please his customers much easier than he could satisfy himself with the product of his skill. Few of that kind build big fortunes. The satisfaction in a good job well done was the sort of pay that men like that enjoyed the most. Many are paid less for what they do.  
(Next stop, the Creamery.)



# Random Recollection

OF

9/17/59

STANLEY G. SMITH

Creamery pond, Creamery branch and Creamery hill--these locations, mapped only in the memory of older residents, took their names from the creamery that was operated on the hill the Frazer truck line uses for its depot. This location, a bit east off of North Main St., was the takeoff spot for coasting. The sled might go clear down to Creamery Branch. It drains a lot of northwest Pinckneyville and the Hincke pasture area. It empties into Beaucoup just below the trestle. (At the upper ford when folks drove to Breeze Lake.)

The building had a platform, wagonbed height, on the south. There, spring wagons backed up so that John Bart could lug big cans of whole milk onto the scales and buy it. Inside, the area had that lye-scrubbed appearance. The atmosphere was filled with the aroma(?) of milk. A big wooden barrel-like churn rocked back and forth continuously until the butter formed. The offal, buttermilk, then in limited demand, went down a drain on the north side and over-flowed a trough. Big black hogs that never counted calories lived happily in that hillside pasture.

Not all the buttermilk went to the hogs. It was available at a nominal price, if any. Samll boys from "Clabber Alley," between Mulberry and St. Louis streets, with even smaller tots tagging along, transported some of it to the home port in a little wagon. It was drawn by a pair of unruly, pungent billy goats named Fred and Harry. There, the milk was used to supplement the range diet of a flock of hens of the chancebred or dunghill variety.

Gruner's hardware store is recalled as the local retail outlet for creamery butter--a luxury beyond the reach of many. An oversize icebox, near the front window, displayed this product in pound prints and in 3 lb. caddies, made of wood veneer. Standard price for this extravagance was one big round silver dollar--too hard comeby for folks who kept a cow.

The output of that little operation must have been more than the local demand. Records, if around, would likely show that a surplus, well iced, went by express to the St. Louis market. This observer, at that time, examined no records.

That creamery had no competition from oleo. A family that had no butter from any source was destitute. Farm families, and many here in town, churned their own. If the milk cows were even part Jersey, that was something to brag about.

Butter brought in from the farms cost less than the creamery product. Anyone with grocery store experience then can testify that country butter varied widely in quality. Dispens full of the round prints, come with distriictive decorations from the molds, came to town on trading days. Damp cloths helped keep the butter fairly solid from the time the butter maker drew it up out of the well until it was exchanged for what the farm family needed and did not grow.

sure grocers knew the names of butter makers who were  
ie trade. Exacting customers were assured that Mrs. So-  
1 just brought that butter in, even if it came from some  
avored source. Another dodge was to assert that the most  
buyer in town had just brought two pounds of it. With  
lling pressure, some became too soft and rancid. It was  
to candy buckets and sold as "sorry butter," to concerns  
some way of using it. Loss on this may have been offset  
n the merchandise exchanged.  
y should write about what a "Better Business Bureau" could  
vered in the so-called "Good Old Days."  
k--Thru "Thorp's Tunnel."

t  
a  
N  
fc  
ti  
p  
a  
a  
nc  
aj



Long before St. Louis Ave., was extended eastward from Murphy St., to Walnut, there was a way to walk across that block. The west part of that route was called "Thorp's Tunnel." It was a cinder path thru a big two-story frame building, used for storage, and a part of Thorp's Carriage Works. The balance of the path was in the open. It extended on past the shops and showroom of that now obsolete enterprise.

The two buildings were connected by a bridge, at second floor height, and a cleated wooden ramp lead up to it. Buggies, drawn by man-power, traversed this elevated tramway.

It was dark, and a bit "spooky," thru that "tunnel" passageway at night. Colored denizens of "Black Hills," when homeward bound from uptown at bedtime, were said to "take roundins" on it. A dilapidated horse-drawn hearse lingered there awaiting overhauling. That may have had some bearing on their preference for a longer route. Or, in some beat-up trade-in vehicle, one who had made but one trip to Degen's for a load that called for three, may have been sleeping one off undisturbed. Scott Brown, Tom Malone, or whoever was "the law" would not molest him there.

The showroom for the carriage business faced on Walnut Street. A brand new rig displayed there drew the admiration of prospective customers, and that of others who could only dream of such a luxury. Nothing ever matched the smell of a show-room-new top buggy. Varnish, camphor-treated carpeting, leather and new oilcloth blended into visions of glory. Boys who drive old jalopies today can not yearn more for a high-priced convertible than youngsters then longed for the best rig around about, and a high-reined trotter hooked up to it.

The ground floor shop back of the showroom had work benches along the wall. A forge, with a big brown, accordin pleated bellows, anvil, water tub and hand made tools, provided facilities for blacksmithing. This was a part of carriage reconstruction. Some of this was routine work, such as shrinking tires on buggy wheels. Pond-soaking and baling wire were just poor makeshift substitutes.

At times, intricate operations were performed on that anvil to improvise iron gimmicks and gadgets to brace or reinforce damaged vehicles. Lacy Peyton was Thorp's expert in this department. Some held that the c should be a z, but he became the concrete block tycoon of Benton. And, he in his day, played a slide trombone with the best of them.

The real fancy work of buggy reconstruction was done by Ed. "Cocky" Thorp himself. His lair was on the upper floor. Visitors behaved or departed, promptly. It took skill to fit stock parts into broken wheels and to perform other types of reconstruction. The artistic repainting jobs were undoubtedly the source of "Cocky's" greatest satisfaction. The paintshop bence had half a buggy axle fastened to it. Wheels were mounted on it for their final refinishing. Surfaces were rubbed, painted and rerubed repeatedly. Lamp-chimney glass and pumice stone created a satin finish. The final coat would shine like a mirror.

With all this piano finish, a buggy wheel was not completely refinished until it had a narrow band of a contrasting color around the felly, (pronounced feller,) or rim. To put on this fancy touch, Thorp would spin the wheel on the axle; aim an artist's brush to let the bending bristols touch the surface lightly just where he wanted it. When the wheel completed its circuit, the ends of the neat stripe met accurately. Thereupon, "Cocky" tilted his panatella a few degrees higher, and asserted, "Damn fine job." Not bragging, just passing judgement on his work.

In addition to the local patronage, when winter was about to limit buggy-riding, Du Quoin livery stables would send a lot of work to Thorp. A team would pull as many beat-up rigs as could get turned at corners on the route. Come spring, these outfits were ready for the return trip, looking good as new, and probably more durable.

Life for this master of his trade was not all exacting work. The cornet section of the band, and impromptu barbershop quartettes, would not have been complete without him. Like many, bird dogs and quail shooting interested him, but his chief hobby was driving carriage teams--preferably four-in-hand. Who else ever drove a horse and buggy in and out of Gable's, when the double doors on the north and east made this feat just short of impossible.

"Cocky?" May. He had a right to be.

9/24/34  
Random Recollection

OF



# Random Recollection

OF

Oct 1, 1959

STANLEY G. SMITH

"The Eaton Plow" was manufactured at Murphy Street and Randolph long before "ten-forty" meant anything except forty more than one thousand. The superior qualities of this product were staunchly claimed by those who used them. Others favored "Spartie" plows that came from Randolph county. This observer fails to qualify for any expert testimony based on actual experience.

Unauthorized and doubtless unwelcome visits to that plant left some lasting impressions of its operation. One, released hereby, may not revolutionize the industry: Barefooted boys should watch out for red hot steel slivers on the floor. It hurts.

That industrial location was just west, across the alley, from T. S. ("Bess") Campbell's barn and horselot. The business brick just west of it housed Stookey's hardware store and "The Graball," company store of the G. W. "Buck" Brown mine. "Grandma" Cowens lived in the white cottage south of it.

As to Enoch, (pronounced Enick,) Eaton's craftsmanship, personal inspection does qualify, providing a mechanic's skill is indicated by his tools. Some so hold. There was an array of tools as shiny as if displayed to sell. Any of them, when removed, revealed the painted outline of it. Eaton laid down rules that tools all had to be returned when not in use, as clean as when they had been taken from the rack.

"Young whippersnappers" may not realize how the plows that Eaton made were used. Now, three and four-bottom plows, each cutting furrows 15" wide, speed over a field behind a tractor, "as fast as a dog can trot." Eaton plows turned at least eight inches. Motive power was "a span of mares," or maybe "hardtails." The plowman walked behind, wrestling the implement around hidden, stubborn stumps. Plowlines, often of rope, were knotted at his back; left one over his shoulder, the right one beneath his arm. Lines were less for guidance than to administer sound slaps to overcome lethargy.

Communication with the team was oral. The big, splay-hooved, unshod, maybe part Percherons knew "Gee" and "Haw." Like "Silver," plow teams were often obviously assumed to have defective hearing. "Woah-Haw" would ring out from the far side of the lower forty so clearly that the neighbors knew the plow was rounding the turn. To break forty acres that way, the farmer had to walk--you figure out how many miles.

Of Eaton's employees, one presumably became a worker in metals by fire in Germany. A big, amicable, shaggy looking brute--got around like a pet bear, with bunions. Name Goetlieb Schmidt? Anyway, he was just called "Buffalo Bill." Hairdo resembled that of Mr. Cody. When whiskers became burdensome, Bill would make himself a razor. A scrap of steel plus his skill produced a blade some said shaved as slick as one honed on a "Schwatti."

The man that kept the books for this concern also then delved into instrumental music. He even toyed with the idea of being a piano tuner. For this he had to have what most people would call a socket wrench, to turn the zillion stobs on which piano wires are fastened. In piano-tuning parlance, it would be a tuning hammer.

The wrench part proper had to be exactly a certain sixteenth inch square. The gadget then made a right angle turn, and had a place to insert a wooden handle. "Buffalo Bill" took on the task of welding one, after hours, and came up with a perfect job. A protest that four-bits was much too small a fee for such fine workmanship brought the reply which, when translated, was--"More money--more schnapps."

Mechanics of that kind would make good plows or quit.

Although a busy executive in charge of an important industry, E. C. Eaton cheerfully did his share to protect the area from an over-population of quail. For this mission he demanded the best possible equipment. A prominent gun maker, or so the story goes, failed to get all of "the bugs" out of a new model.

"Uhudi," the little old man who turns lights on and off in glove compartments, a beginner then, tried to eject discharged shells from shotguns. On this new model "Uhudi" goofed. Eaton tinkered with it and came up with a gimmick that worked. The firm that made the gun was told that Eaton fixed it. And, so goes the yarn, they asked his terms on a deal whereby they could see the gizmo. Eaton, they say, informed them he would like to have a few new guns for himself and friends. A case of them was soon forthcoming, in a delux finish, with artistic curlicues engraved on silver-plated ornamental work. And, "Eaton's Improved" was in the name of that product thereafter.

That type of talent would demand perfect performance in making plows.

Other tycoons of the implement business made more, if not better plows, but probably enjoyed life no more than did this small-time, small town industrialist.

IT'S APPLE TIME



10/8/59  
Random Recollection

OF

STANLEY G. SMITH

"If 'ifs' and 'ands' were pots and pans we'd have no need of Gruner here. "That retort to any "iffy" excuse was quoted by old timers here, possibly a hundred years ago.

The oldest business in town needs no promotion from this source. The fourth-generation management repeatedly demonstrates its ability in that line. But--if customers now demanded cups and pans and washboilers, hand made, on the premises, they would not be accommodated. Not so when Charlie Gruner, mechanical gemius of that venerable institution, worked at his trade in the long, low, white frame building on the alley at the northwest corner of the square.

That structure, probably the original home of the business, bore a sign, originally "P. Gruner." It was of the time honored lamp-black-turpentine kind that will outwear the wood. Some joker had inserted a letter "I" between the initial and the proud family name to make the sign read "PIGRUNER." The "I" could never be entirely painted out.

Anyone of this writer's tender age can only speculate that Phillip Gruner, (The First,) ever hammered out the pots and pans for this community. It is presumed that he may have taught his son Charles the trade. If so, he did it well. When these observations started, "Old" Phillip Gruner sat. He might be in front of the store, beneath the wooden awning and the little maple trees, now long gone. He might be on the big front porch of the three-story Gruner mansion on North Main Street, but where he was, he sat. From his dignified complacency, one might get the impression that he had it made and knew it, and that he was content to allow others to make their own.

The three sons of pioneer, second generation of the local Gruner clan, all played their parts in the business. Charlie was the one who worked wonders with a blowtorch, soldering iron, tin snips and other implements of the sheetmetal worker's art. Moulds and special hammers were brought into play to pound out pans in solid seamless construction.

The shop had a perennial contract to supply cups for the school. When school started, the iron pump would be festooned with dozens of little zinc or galvanized metal cups, tied on with a trot-line type of string. That cord was fine and dandy for spinning tops, a lost art now. Soon, pupils dug the cups out of the dirt or snow when thirsty. They, (the cups, not the pupils,) were sturdily constructed. They were a little small, but would outlast oyster cans in shinny games. Health authorities, now, might frown upon the facilities available then, but no epidemic of bubonic plague is in the records.

Gruners' store, in the easy-going era, was also a show place, but with a slower tempo. The big baseburner, with icingglass windows, burning anthracity, made the rear of the store the warmest

place around. Customers liked to stay around. Up front, a big glass tank, with a wonderland of mossy stone castles in it, was the home of several languid fish. Not every store had--or took--so much time to present such displays. Handiwork of the sheetmetal shop played its part in the presentations.

Charlie Gruner may have been somewhat unassuming and inconspicuous. The Macks traveled to play ball. Even so, some remember him as a craftsman who right well knew his stuff--and did it. Who can do more?



# Random Recollection

OF

10/15/54  
STANLEY G. SMITH

If you knew the path that bordered Creamery Branch-- And, if you knew how to slip the brim of a new two-bit hichory hat beneath overall suspenders where they crossed, to bend over, resting both hands on the sandstone slab to drink your fill at Hale's spring--

And, if you ever played around on the leaky platform part of the old wooden dam that spanned Beaucoup-- caught crayfish there, and called it "ketchin' crawdads,"

And, if you knew that cool relief, to hot, tired, caloused, dirty feet, came from letting slick, green, slimy moss ooze up between your toes there-- Shake. Brother, you belong. You may have been another google-eyed "sidewalk superintendent," with no sidewalk to stand on.

That would be to watch Wm. R. ("Bud") Martin and Jasper Polly, of The Beahrtown Pollys, sink and operate a mine. Of all the shafts and slopes and open pits that ever operated here, and that means a lot of mines, this one really was distinctive.

These men then were coal operators. They owned the business, and they did all the work. One might observe that they differed somewhat from some other operators--say such as Jesse Diamond Sr., and Eddie Hartenfeldt.

The Martin-Polley mine was sunk between the banks of Beaucoup creek, between the then W. C. & W. track and the now Victory addition, then Smith's pasture. It was a calculated risk, as army brass would call it. They knew the ways of Beaucoup creek, and that the next highwater season would put them out of business. Patient men, they could begin again--and did, farther south, beneath a sycamore that gave another mine a name.

No mine that comes to mind could have cost less--in cash--to develop and operate, and none demanded more foot-pounds of brawny expenditure per ton of coal produced. The muscles of these men and of their teams moved the coal from where The Creator left it to the coal sheds of their patrons.

This sedentary softie's calluses formed in the wrong places to en-

able a discription of mining operations in the accepted parlance of the trade, so this will have to do:

The Martin-Polly development began by shoveling away the dirt and shale at the spot selected for the shallow shaft. Ten feet would likely be about the total depth of it. One parmer squatted and held a chisel and the other swung a sledge to drill a hole to shoot the rock off the coal. A little dynamite was needed.

They built a windlass of timber they cut in the nearby woods. Uprights were braced in place with a few spikes fastening the supporting timbers. The "cable-drum," if that is what they call it, of a deep shaft mine, is several feet in diameter. It whirls at a terrific speed when it is in operation. The drum for this device was a tree trunk. The ends were cut down in diameter to rest on rounded bearings carved in the supports. An occasional dab of axle grease was used to quiet squeaks of friction. A crank was fashioned at one end. Rope to wind around this "drum," fastened to a tub made from some old discarded barrell, completed this "histing" equipment.

To haul the coal up, the miners bowed their backs to turn the crank. So near the cropout, mine men say, to drill and blast down the coal would be disastrous. They had the task of undercutting and wedging the coal from the seam. That may be what was called "beatin' boney." How far back into the overflow land they may have mined before the operation ended perhaps no one would know.

Another cash expenditure avoided was the "royalty." They exchanged a winter's requirements of clean, shiney chunks of top coal for the right to dig out all that Beaucoup--or some mine examiner permitted them to remove.

It is good bet at any odds that no blueprints or cost accountant's calculations were ever made in connection with this enterprise. Man-hours per ton of production? It is unlikely that anyone ever knew, or cared.

Whatever these men got for all the coal they broke out and lunged and pushed and heaved into their wagons and delivered, they must have right well earned it.

W. E. King et al



## Random Recollection

OF 10/22/59

STANLEY G. SMITH

Herrin has a corner called "The Doughboy." The statue of the World War I soldier is no longer there.

Lower Four Mile Prairie has its "Big Elm" crossroads. The tree that was a landmark has long since decayed.

To designate the crossing where Kaskaskia and Grant Streets meet as do Front Street and County Road, railroad men have a sign. With one hand, they motion like hammering rapidly, then cross the forearms to make an X, which means "crossing" anywhere. To them, it is "Cooper-shop Crossing," even if they never saw a coopershop, and never will. There, they see Zacher's well kept lawn.

Duckworth's O. K. Mill doubtless had its shop there soon after the railroad was built. When that mill ceased operations, the plant became a coopershop--and that would be before they sank The Maine.

That building and its contents burned one summer Sunday afternoon. A big red barn-like structure, at Douglas and Kaskaskia streets, served as a coopershop for a season. That, then, would be south of Solon Kugler's store, or maybe as far back as when Frank Roe operated there. Anyway, the O. K. Mill location again became the cooperage center, and so remained until flour barrels were no longer in demand. Few want to buy 1961lbs of flour at once, or have space for Billy Craig to trundle a barrel of flour in to the kitchen cupboard.

Coopershops, anywhere, made a type of music no longer heard. Twenty, maybe thirty master coopers hammering hoops in place on the barrels, set up a symphony of industry. They worked on a piecework basis. The faster they hammered, the more they found in their pay envelopes, come Saturday.

Putting staves and hoops and heading together to make a barrel looked easy, perhaps because the coopers worked so fast. They could make a bunch of staves stand on end and dance into a circle, held in shape by truss hoops until the hoops they made were fitted on. Ends of the barrels had to be drawn in by using a sort of twister

made of rope. A groove was plowed in the staves at the ends by swishing a half-round plane around the inner circumference of the barrels. That was to take the beveled edges of the heading. It came in pieces that fit to form the disc.

Flat hoops came in bundles of coils, and were cut to the proper length, bent into circles and nailed together.

Hickory hoops--called round hoops in the trade, because the surface was rounded, were made as needed by the coopers, from hoop poles. They mauled wedge-like splitters the length of the poles to split them in two, three, sometimes four strips of rough but flexible bark and wood. Soaking in a vat softened the saplings, cut when the sap was down.

The sections of hickory poles lay beside the "snitzelbunk," where the cooper sat to wield a drawing knife. Foot pedals operated a clamp that held the long sticks firmly for the shaving process. A few well directed blows "cut a lock," as coopers called it. Intricate notches were formed so that the ends of the strips, overlapped and interlocked so that they stayed that way.

Before the final head was forced into place, the barrel was upended over a cylindrical woodburning stove for a heat treatment or drying process. The last head in place, the barrel was heaved upward thru a hole to the loft to await Mike's wagon.

Shavings, piled out front, were up for grabs for all who needed kindling. Chopping the long, sprangly strips into cookstove length was a routine chore for many of us. A Dave Dunn one-horse wagon load looked like an endless task--and more would follow.

Cutting the hoop poles was a source of needed cash income for those who braved the winter and knew where hickories grew. They were leaned against the trees to keep the snow from hiding them until enough had been chopped down and trimmed to form the bark tied bundles that were hauled in on the running gears of farm wagons. Not easy money, but it helped buy the beans.

Coopers had to have a lot of skill, and they worked hard and fast to earn their pay, but they had something on the rest of us. They were probably the first of all trades here to adopt the fiveday week. On Saturday morning, they would show up at the shop, in their semi Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes. When pay envelopes were passed out to them, most of the crew perpetuated an ancient coopershop custom. They chipped in a few dimes and delt with Stecher's local representative. An adle went down the hatch before the men made their payday rounds to settle up with Henry Gieser, Jake Lambert, Fred Ulrich, or elsewhere about town. Stecher? Adle? Ask any oldtimer, preferably a German.

Easy? It just looked that way. An adle to their memory. Mud-in-your-eye.



# Random Recollection

OF

10/29/59

STANLEY G. SMITH

BOLOGNA "BISTRO"

Anyone who listens long enough to radio or TV programs is sure to hear commercials. Some amuse. Some awaken pity for the poor deluded or misguided announcer.

When some high-pressure salesman starts to rant about the flavor of bologna sausage made by some packing company he is "talking thru his hat." That character may be making a ton of money. He may feast on four-buck steaks, lobster tails and caviar. He may make the rounds of all the famous eating places here and abroad--but he has missed the boat on bologna sausage.

It never was his rare good fortune to walk down Douglas street here, at the right time, on the right evening, to whiff the appetizing aroma of bologna as was bologna.

The treat that many enjoyed here was never advertised on radio or by TV. The only advertisement needed was the odor, and the regular appearance of the dark red links suspended on the rack at the front window of Henry Dipple's little butcher shop.

Whether the meat that went into that sausage came from prime or choice cornfed steers or from a milk cow culled from some farmer's herd, nobody cared to know. No white smocked government inspector had to check up on Dipple's operations at the slaughter house in his pasture west of town. A firey team of black ponies, Jett and June, "with readin' on their hips," pranced into town. The butcher wagon would be loaded with fresh killed carcasses--and Dipple kids. Work got underway in the backyard sausage kitchen.

Just how Dipple and the whole hard-working family ground it up and cooked it, and what seasoning they used may be in nobody's cookbook. It might be hard to duplicate if anyone knew how, and what went into it.

When carried in from the spick and span sausage kitchen, in big dishpanful lots and placed on sale, the aroma of it brought in the customers. It was soft, and juicy, and whoever put the spices in it was not the least bit stingy. A link of it then left you some change from a two-bit piece, but money does not buy it now.

Taste, of course, is purely a matter of opinion. But, for the fortunate who feasted on Dipple's bologna, this self-appointed spokesman offers this observation. Anyone who would put packinghouse bologna in the same league with Dipple's product could not distinguish it from applebutter.



The next was a round hole, with a sa ging disc of sole leather tacked over it. Farther than the workman could reach, there was space to store assorted tools. There would be knives of various sizes and shapes, all whetted to a razor edge, needlepointed awls and hammers for diverse purposes, as sorted tacks and a box of shoe pegs. Leather shoes awaiting reconstruction would be in evidence. Raw material in view always included ten of cowhides. A cylindrical roll of this sole leather, untied, spread out as big as the barrel in the corner of the shop. The soft, black "upper" leather, was carefully stored away. And for deluxe productions, there would be pieces of red and blue "Morocco." This high priced material, inlaid in fancy designs, ornamented the tops of boots for the sportive-minded patrons. Fancy stitching, hand or machine, made the quilted, insulated and high-topped ladies' shoes real works of art.

Sole leather, cut from the whole hides, seemed to need alot of soaking. On a heavy iron support that rested across the shoemaker's knees, this moisture was pounded out of the leather with a hammer. This operation was performed repeatedly. Howlong the had to soak it, how many times they had to hammer the water out of it and howinell they didn't find something to support the work besides their tired old knees will probably always remain a mystery.

Hand sewing soles was another painstaking task. The linen thread had to be pulled through a gob of beeswax many times before it could be used. Sharp awls made the holes in geometric precision. They took their time, like the artists they were, and spared no effort that would add durability to their products.

Now, one who wants to go all out for fancy footweat, or one who must have shoes made to fit deformities, can find custom shoemakers elsewhere. Some things he will miss. He will not see thaone and only George L. "cut the pigeon wing" with the grace that would win a spot in any Icecapade." He will get no learned discourse, in English or in German, on conditions in "Der Vaterland." He will get no first-hand reports on Sherman's march from "Atlanta to the sea." And--awaiting service or just visiting, he will not vie with Billy Branch or Theo. Gosney for the checker championship of Clabber Alley.



# Random Recollection

OF

STANLEY G. SMITH

## CIGAR INDUSTRY

They had a name for him. Some brighter brain may recall it. He did not answer to any name because he was a wooden Indian with a fistfull of wooden cigars. He stood shackled to a porch post in front of Wagner's cigar shop on Walnut Street.

Walnut, in those days, was where business was conducted leisurely. From Kugler's store at Mulberry southward to where Dr. Emmet ("Possum") Peyton had his drugstore, wooden awnings made one continuous canopy for shelter.

This community never rivaled Tampa or Pittsburg as a cigar manufacturing center, but, among others, the Wagners were in the business here for years. Prof. Wagner was much better known as a bandmaster, orchestra leader and music teacher. But, the hands that had a magic touch when they fondled a cornet or a violin could also shape the fillers, carve and roll on the wrappers of handmade cigars. That is, he could unless some music lesson, pinochle game or just plain sociability interfered. Making music and musicians and enjoying life came first with "Billy" Wagner. Making money was just an essential annoyance.

It seems that it was always open house in Wagner's shop. The boys helped some at the cigar bench, spasmodically. Edward might need to practice on what the old maestro called "The King of Instruments," the trombone, or what he called the "Queen," the violin. Arthur might also find some alibi, and Harley had his curve and fast ball to perfect. He almost made the bigtime. Happy family, the Wagners.

Later, farther south on Walnut, about where Jakie (Up-side-down) Degen lived, or not far north of Krogers now, there was another one-man cigar factory. It was operated by one Frank Graul, pronounced growl. He did, frequently. Graul was a businessman. His aim in life was to make and sell cigars.

Cigar revenue regulations contained a rule that meant woe be unto the man that maketh and selleth cigars in the same place. To comply with this restriction, Graul's shop, in the south part of the room, was separated from the salesroom by a substantial partition, made of poultry netting. The door was always wide open--swung back smackdab against the wall and blocked there by the cigar maker's bench. But, it provided the required segregation of production and sales.

That he might never miss a chance to make a sale, Graul, who had his living quarters in the rear, suspended a bell above the front door. It would clang to call him when the door was opened.

Little rascallions along Walnut Street, who were not about to buy cigar, knew about the bell. It was not at all uncommon for them to climb the three steps up to the door, push it open, and when Frank came in from an interrupted meal, to sing out, "Open the door and hear Frank growl," and then run like the devil was after them, as far as the Rice Eaton corner.

Any effort to taunt or torment "Billy" Wagner would have been ed entirely out of order in any group of kids. The old "Prof" has butless long since gone to his reward. Worry ulcers would never suspected as the cause. Old time bandmen, now, are proud to art, "I played with Wagner." He would want no better monument.

Pearl Breitweiser to Clem Col-

10-30-59; Lt. 7 Bk.



# Random Recollection

OF Nov. 19, 1957

STANLEY G. SMITH

## PERFECT CRIME ?

A police bulletin would, and probably did, refer to him as an itinerant construction laborer, male, colored, medium height and weight. "Hey You" is all he had for a name insofar as is now recalled. That salutation may have been, at times, embroidered by more descriptive terms denoting color and maternal ancestry.

"Hey You" was an itinerant who sojourned here briefly. When the middle section of the grade school building was reconstructed--about 1898--"Hey You" was on the job. If he had carried a hod, he would have been just another hod carrier. He used his head.

Construction contractors now use mechanized equipment to hoist the brick and mortar to the masons on high scaffolds. W. G. Wilson, who had that contract, was not so equipped. He hired hod carriers, as did other builders at that time. One trained in that laborious trade could balance the big V-shaped container on a shoulder and mount a ladder with alacrity.

"Hey You" wore a well worn winter cap--the kind that pulls down all around. The bill was torn from this cap, and the cap itself was pulled down, not for warmth, but so that it held some three inches or more of padding, presumably railroad waste. When Harry Gruver, or whoever "Hey You" served, yelled "Mud," "Hey You" scooped up a candy bucket full of mortar, balanced it on his head and went right up the ladder with it. If the order called for brick, he had a board on which he stacked as many as a standard hod would hold, and bore it, likewise, head high, up to the work in progress.

Now that is about all there is about this transient laborer, except his sad demise.

Who he was, whence he came, nobody seemed to know. Perhaps nobody cared. He was just another tramp laborer.

Around the job, he kept unto himself. No one bothered him, and he bothered nobody. When not at work, he sat alone.

"Doc" Bigbee, doubtless of African ancestry, to some extent, may

have been another workman on the job, but "Doc" was a well-known local citizen. The two did not fraternize.

"Hey You" scrounged around, somehow, to eat. It was rumored that, for some unknown reason, presumably a superstition, he refrained from sleeping in the same place repeatedly. There were "bo-jungles" around about. In summer, sleeping quarters posed no serious problem for men "on the road."

One morning, "Hey You" failed to answer roll call.

Later, over in the Hincke pasture, someone found what was left of him--with the head that had carried countless tons of brick and mortar right well bashed in. "Hey You" was just about as dead as people ever get.

Investigation revealed that a coupling pin, like the W. C. & W. used then, lay nearby, nasty with blood. And, it was reported that the night man at the pump house, near Breese Lake, heard some one running eastward on the track that night.

Any reader of "whodunits" knows there just has to be a motive. Why someone wanted "Hey You" dead would leave a lot of room for guesswork. Without attempting to check any records, it would appear that "Death from a blow with a blunt instrument, in the hands of a party or parties unknown," would about close the case.

A Court with greater jurisdiction than the Circuit Court of Perry County--or of any other on earth--would adjudicate.



# Random Recollection

OF

Nov. 26, 1959

STANLEY G. SMITH

## Livery Stable Chambermaid

William Borden, when in his prime, was called "Billy Barlow." How he had that cognomen hung on him, perhaps no one now around would know. One theory is that it came from an old ballad. It was of the sort the "Toby" of a medicine show would try to sing. The song recited heroic acts of many historic events and extolled the virtues of the heroes involved. Each stanza was followed by a refrain asserting that the hero took his first lessons from one "Billy Barlow." Borden taught few, if any, anything. In later years, Billy was known as "Snuffy." This he disliked. One of seven?

The late Dr. W. W. Kane once apologetically admitted that, as a young school teacher, he had Borden as a pupil, but probably did him little good. The mild mannered medic, in self defense, explained that lack of material hinders success in any undertaking.

Borden did attain some recognition as a minor executive in an important business establishment of his time. He was in charge of sanitation and internal transportation in Kane's livery stable. He cleaned stalls and wheeled used bedding to the soiled sawdust pile.

The wheelbarrow Billy used was planned for maximum cubic capacity, and was much too big for one of Borden's build. Pushing it, his arms had to be extended almost horizontally, but he carried on successfully.

Although an important personage in the stable's organization, it is not recalled that Billy ever advanced to driver of the hearse. He may have been entrusted with the second or third open carriage, for the in-laws and such, behind the closed cabs for the family. That would be in about a B-Plus, 2-preacher funeral, and Billy would rate a clean shirt that week.

Job opportunities change. Even proficient livery stable "chambermaids" became unemployed. Chances to drive carriage teams in funeral processions diminished. Such coin of the realm as Billy could accumulate, he cherished. He became, at times, a way-

farrer. Periodically, he journeyed into Arkansas, the hard way. Upon returning, he enjoyed recounting his experiences enroute to any who were interested a trifle, or even less.

Billy told how, on one return trip, foot-sore and weary, he tired to cross the river on the Cape Girardeau Bridge. The toll-gate man demanded a quarter. He was duly informed that, at St. Louis, the crossing could be made without parting with the quarter, and that, in due time, the traveler would prove it.

Weeks passed. Finally, Billy trudged up the east approach of the "Cape" bridge and proudly displayed the quarter that had been demanded and denied. Billy was back in Illinois and it had cost no-

thing--except a few hundred miles more travel.

Increasing years and Billy's mode of travel indicated his need of a substantial cane. Solicitous friends constructed one for him. The solid brass ferrule on this cane extended fully a foot up its length, and it was long enough for Wilt Chamberlain. Friends wished him well and forecast a pleasant sojourn in "Mt. Idie," or where-ever in Arkansas he visited. And, Billy was assured a friendly welcome back to Walnut Street, upon his ultimate return--providing the intervening travel had worn away the foot or so of solid metal.

Final figures on effects of travel by way of abrasion of solid brass in a walking stick await Billy's return. It may be that this profound research project will never be completed.

Billy has been absent from the scene for years. It may well be that, somewhere, sometime, his grasp on the staff-like cane was relinquished. It may now lay beside "The Scepter of The Prince."



## Random Recollection

OF

Dec. 3, 1959

STANLEY G. SMITH

CHEYENNE CHARLIE

"Cheyenne Charlie's" sojourn here was brief. He drifted in like other roving deaf mutes who panhandle what they can and travel on. Charlie was not entirely a moocher. He would cash in on his infirmities, but he was not an ordinary bum. Reportedly, he had a pension, and he seemed to get along right well.

Charlie explained that the moniker, "Cheyenne," was his because of skill as a rope twirler. He never had a lariat, but he could go thru the motions. He was tall, slender and soldierly, in spite of a slightly gimpy leg. He carried a cane, more for swagger than for support. With the requisite liquid inspiration, Charlie, and an imaginary rope, would go thru the routine of top-flight vaudeville or rodeo rope twirlers. His movements were so realistic that his audience could almost see the swirling loop expand then tighten; ascend and descend and go thru all of the intricate writhing motions that won applause for theatrical cow waddies. He had mastered pantomime, and could focus your attention where he wanted it.

Charlie's ability to express himself by signs and a continuous transition of facial expressions would indicate that he had been a deaf mute from birth. This he denied. His hands were always clean, like those of a hash house "pearl diver." His slender, sensitive fingers suggested that he might be a pianist, a fiddler--or a blind man. He did play a mouth organ in a lonesome cowboy sort of way.

The Battleship Maine had gone down not more than a dozen years or so before "Cheyenne Charlie" was here. He claimed to be one of the few survivors. He insisted the explosion was from inside as did some others, but investigators disagreed. Charlie claimed the loss of voice and hearing, his slight lameness, and an admitted mental weakness, had been caused by the explosion--hence the pension. And, there were those who thought he lied.

Like too many of us, Charlie felt inclined to write. Much worse, this observer holds, he thought he was a poet. Out of pity for the afflicted, and just possibly a deserving disabled veteran, this softie held still to type some of his so-called verse. It stank. More was offered. Further typing help was courteously denied. The excuse offered was the fear of impairment of eyesight due to excessive strain.

The excuse was accepted with the most "eloquent" reply possible

silently. The would-be poet, Charlie, tapped his injured leg. His face said clearly that he could stand that, and smile. He made the time-honored gesture whereby deaf mutes announce that infirmity. His face said he could take it, cheerfully. He whirled his index finger in small circles at the side of his head, which denotes "screwball" anywhere, and indicated that was not to bad either. Then, Charlie's face grew serious. He motioned to indicate the loss of sight. Then, in due solemnity, he drew his long, artistic fingers across his throat. Looked like he meant it.

Charlie had his headquarters in a gin mill, and he aided in its operations various ways. The proprietor of this joint was visiting another spot one night when Charlie came in. Charlie faced the bar and made motions with extended elbows like a feeble old bird flying. A bottle bearing a yellow label was placed before him. After downing a shot, the silent customer offered the barkeep a coin, which was declined.

The visiting rum merchant questioned the host about this generosity. The reply was that no one should charge a "dummy" for a drink. "He's my porter," the visitor explained. And, he added that

five would get him ten that Charlie packed a bigger bankroll than the donor of the drink. And--he warned to watch Charlie very closely if he ever met him at a crap table.

There came a day when Charlie was missing from his usual haunts. Here today--gone tomorrow. One wondered why the abrupt and unannounced departure.

Inquiry yielded an explanation that seemed plausible. Some said he had just tried too hard. After seven straight passes--and nothing dragged down, Charlie had thrown out three dice in place of two.



## Random Recollection

OF

Dec. 19, 1959

STANLEY G. SMITH

HOTEL RUNNER

They were called "Hotel Runners," but they were by no means the operators or managers of hotels. Their trade, profession or calling no longer fits into the scheme of things.

Members of that ancient fraternity solicited patronage for the small town hotels that flourished when the traveling public came and went by rail. Their duties and extra-curricular activities also included those of redcaps, porters and bellhops--and that takes in a lot of territory.

As a local representative of this long extinct species, those who knew him will right well remember Jake Hodge. Not Blunt Hodge, he was mild-mannered, soft spoken vegetable grower--the lad who tapped timidly at the back door to inform you--"You all don't wanna buy no buttah beans does ya?" Not "Tiny," who wasn't, but could cook with the best of them, thanks to training by Mrs. E. W. Fisher--and by the Souverin State of Illinois, at Pontiac--Jake, the little hunchback.

For those who came along too late to know Jake Hodge, it is rather difficult to draw a picture just with words. It might be stretching it a little, but not much, to compare his complexion with the color of the little piano keys that come in twos and threes. If his pigmentation was not of the midnight darkness it was about eleven fifty-nine and four fifths.

And, Jake was cheerful about his pronounced deformity--maybe a bit proud of the distinction. His explanation was--"Mammy drap me--musta been on a flat rock--fum de tip top of a tall tree." He found nothing to complain about.

A portrayal of Jake functioning as a "runner" would need a picture of Billy Duncan's old white, or once-white hack, to be complete. It would show Jake in a role that many more fortunate youngsters yearned for--riding the back step of the old hack. Jake rode it officially, and adroitly. Gripping the shining hand rails of the step, he would sway and bounce, as the hack lurched over bumps, like a boxer rolling with the punch. His skillful maneuvers were like unto those of a toy tin monkey that could climb a string.

Just how many generations Jake was from the jungle no one would know, but he didn't look like it, was that many.

Jake rode the hack because he proudly represented the Commercial hotel. That would have been in about the W. T. Cook regime. The Tanners offer travelers shelter and sustenance there now, as did "Coonskin" Sullivan, according to tradition, a century ago.

That is the Walnut-Water Streets intersection.

Jake knew, by name, the "drummers" who passed this way on their rounds, and they knew, and liked, the friendly little hunchback. He met the travelers at the trains, escorted and assisted them to their rooms, and, on their departure, Jake sped them on their ways.

It has been rumored around about that, in those days, at times, some citizens were prone to indulge in a certain sport, pass time, amusement--or occupation--called shooting craps. Upon such occasions, Jake was in demand, like a ball team needs a mascot. There was a school of thought that held firmly to the theory that the ivories, or "African dominoes," when rubbed vigorously on Jake's humped back, would hear their master's voice and do his bidding. Proof of this is lacking.

The shoeshine franchise at Tom Lee's barber shop, where the Murphy-Wall bank now stands, was another source of revenue for Jake. Promising looking customers, alighting from the barber chair, were worked over thoroughly by Jake, wielding a whisk broom that was long enough even for him to reach the shoulders of a full grown man. He could beat a rhymic tatoo with one hand, to remove real or imaginary particles, and extend the other, palm up. To shine shoes, he could stand almost erect because he was so short. And, he could pop a mean shine cloth.

A tape recording of the genuine Jake Hodge laugh would be worth a fortune in Hollywood today. It lacked the volume of the loud guffaw of the late Eli Cross of Du Quoin, but it always sounded sincere. It may have been a way to win friends and influence people to up the tips whereby Jake lived.

No one could write the words and music for that laugh. It exploded with a high-pitched "Whaa," that was followed by a long series of "Haws," in gradually diminishing vehemence, then a throaty chuckle. When anything touched off this merriment, Jake's head rolled back against what looked like something hidden under his coat, enough to flatten out the kinks in his hair. His face just vanished. An open mouth as was a mouth replaced it. One that would compare was on a New Orleans singer in Cinerama Holiday. An alligator could duplicate it. Jake enjoyed life.

Jake's narrow chest protruded like unto that of a prima-dona--or a pouter pigeon--a part of his deformity. But for all that, TB took him. He may have known that he would go that way. Anyway, he had made his boast that he would never hang, not because he would never deserve it, but because he had no neck.



## Random Recollection

OF

Dec 17, 1959

STANLEY G. SMITH

TATOO ARTIST

This community has developed citizens who have won high honors in a wide diversity of activities. If anyone attempted to select the old home town boy who had done the best in any standardized trade or profession, he would be sticking out his neck.

"The World's Greatest Tatoo Artist," by his own admission, can be claimed by this community, if that would help any.

Eddie Watkins may never have enjoyed the recognition he longed for here among the people who knew him best. He had to be a wanderer for years. Early in life, his "foster family" had a little bean soup and sandwich joint near the then busy Wabash, Chester and

Western depot. A heavy passenger interchange at that junction point afforded some patronage. Long delays and threatening starvation, it seems, reduce aversion to threats of tomaine.

Eddie, in his spare time, which was abundant, infested the depot, when Kirby, ("Clabber") Dunn worked there, Eddie had a laugh, if it could be so called, that sounded like the mating call of an ambitious and persistent billy goat. He kept it up continuously, and for no apparent reason. That irked Kirby beyond endurance. He may have been charged with attempting to do bodily harm to his never welcome visitor, but extenuating circumstances would have cleared him, even if he had been fast enough to kick his pants. It happened regularly.

Even with great pride in the old home town, and duly loyal to all fellow citizens, in all fairness, one would just have to admit that Elvis Pressley, and perhaps thousands of others, became more famous than Eddie Watkins as guitarists and singers. But, Eddie tried. His career as a strolling bard or troubador might have been far more successful but for a train wreck. Other results of the derailment, such as crushing an old wooden boxcar, may have been of greater consequence.

Eddie, fortunately--for him, anyway--escaped with only minor injuries. But, the guitar, perhaps worth about \$3.75 in some hawkshop then; was said to be a total loss. A claim against the railroad company, insofar as is known, has never been adjusted. It would appear that common carriers are not obligated to transport property of trespassers bumming rides.

Long before this local lad claimed world-wide recognition for his artistry with the tatooists needle, he was honored by plaudits of the populace. It was one July fourth. In those days, a celebration at the fairgrounds, with a big parade was standard procedure. Now, we never hear of "tugmuttons." Mr. Webster may not know it, but it meant a clown on horseback, with some sort of ridiculous costume.

Business concerns sponsored these participants in the big parade. Without consulting the records, if any, it would seem to be a logical conclusion that a livery stable, then on Water Street, a block west from Walnut, arranged for Eddie's participation in the great event. He, and the horse, needed advance preparation, or a sort of warm up in advance. Eddie wore a substantial bearskin coat, well secured about his neck with a long woolen, knitted nubia, or muffler. A coonskin cap, of the Davie Crocket type, adorned his head, and may have hampered him in hearing the applause. Thick felt boots--(the 4-clasp "arctics" would not go in the stirrups)--encased his feet. Pre-heated pinetar was poured in to keep them on, and warm. Temperature, that day, was about 94.

Eddie won first prize--and doubtless earned it.

According to his story, Eddie learned the art of tatooing in California. Some returning traveler reported that, visiting some skid row, he heard a sound that made him look around to see if he could find the billy goat. He found Eddie.

Eddie, upon his return to Southern Illinois, proved to be the exception to a then well-established country newspaper rule. Impoverished editors were presumed to buy anything providing the vendor would take it out in advertising.

Eddie wanted space to tell the world that he was its greatest tatoo artist. He had the copy ready--even cuts of some of his most popular designs. He offered to affix any of them that this scant frame had room to accomodate in exchange for some display advertising.

Look--No sale.







## Random Recollection

OF

STANLEY G. SMITH

MILL PICK DRESSER

Only hearsay evidence remains that Samuel Barton Phipps reconditioned tools with which mill stones were overhauled. Mills hereabouts quit grinding with stones too far back for this recollector. Sam's limited earnings came from making butcher knives; his income was from promising to make them, and from gratuities.

For a while, Sam tried hawking apples to travelers. His method of polishing them, unobserved by prospective customers, may have been unappetizing and perhaps unsanitary, but he could make them shine. He had the sniffles, but no handkerchief. This enterprise was sponsored by a sort of "Youth Center," or unaffiliated Y. M. C. A. that functioned temporarily in the old Carter building at the Walnut Cafe location and later at the former Enoch Eaton place, later Trefftz's, on Randolph. That was in the coaloil lamp era, around 1906. That is recalled because someone around this glorified loafing place tried giving Sam the cure by putting coal-oil in his flask. It did not work.

An early recollection of Sam's metal working operations recalls a little blacksmith shop on Walnut, in the City Hall area. Sam chased some citizen who was about twice his size out of the shop. A hammer in one hand and a pair of pinchers clamping a bar of red hot steel made up the difference. The explanation of this altercation was that Sam was cold sober, and that an intruder tried to learn his secret for tempering a knife.

Another contact with this character when he was irate and frustrated was in the courthouse yard. A public "necessary" stood in the east part of the dogennel lawn. It had a latticework screen around it in the interest of appearances, privacy or common decency. That day, Sam was in the clutches of the law, or of courthouse pranksters. He wore the badge of disobedience--a ball and chain. This he resented. With a few practice swings, Sam heaved the heavy ball over the top of the latticework, like an athlete throwing the hammer. The momentum of the weight hiked Sam's shackled leg up higher than his head. He needed help to get on his feet again.

One would hardly classify Sam Phipps as a singer, but he promoted many cans of brew by trying--or desisting. His repertoire of sentimental ballads included one about the betrayal and demise of Jesse James. The way Sam wept when singing this would indicate that Jesse had been near kin. Another--perhaps THE other--was about the fire in Milwaukee--and some distraught mother praying for the fireman to save her darling "cheeld." This, too, brought

sobs. Emotional would-be entertainer. For these renditions Sam h out an accompaniment on the upturned bottom of his gri Relationship between the singing and the pecking w. y coincidental, but it emphasized the disastrous emptiness of the can. That situation demanded a remedy, for which dimes were contributed.

At times, Phipps sacrificed what dignity he carried to restore the alcoholic content of his system. Contributors to his beer fund provided the container--a little yellow chamber pot--and made Sam traipse several blocks with the pot full of beer. A stale doughnut, broken in pieces, would be added to the beer at no extra cost. It added something other than taste appeal to the appearance of the potful of beer.

Nature did not favor Sam in his appearance. His eyes were weak and about as expressive as eggs fried in bacon grease. But, they were usually shifted toward first base anyway. His nose took a turn for the worse, perhaps from some bar room brawl. The defective sight, Sam explained, resulted from a case of measles he experienced, sleeping in a snow drift back of some gin mill from which he had been evicted for non-payment. Even without any medical degree, one might presume that measles patients would recover better under other circumstances.

"Muddy" would probably be the proper classification of Sam's complexion. It indicated total abstinence from soap. But, as to clothing, Sam favored the styles and fabrics that had been selected by the best dressed men in town--after they discarded them.

Sam's home, for years, was where his hat was off. Some barns provided shelter. Except for some months at the "Youth Center", the houses he occupied were likely limited to the jail and county farm. The latter he resented. He said he liked to feel the bricks of city sidewalks beneath his worn shoesoles.

But for the kindness of the late A. A. Driemeyer, Phipps might have ended up his days decidedly insolvent. To make up for Driemeyer's perhaps slightly liberal estimate of prior loans unpaid, plus the price of a pint, Sam gave Driemeyer his personal note for a cool million dollars. Later, Sam figured it was possible that an unknown rich uncle might bequeath him a fortune, and that Driemeyer would get it. The note, along with other scrap paper, was ceremoniously destroyed.

In his declining years, Phipps sought shelter, on cold nights, in The Democrat office. He "janated" a little for the space on the space on the floor, and a nest of readyprint wrappers. One cold and snowy night, a printer, working late, noted that the fire was low and the coal bucket empty. Sam was roused from his nest and ordered to fire up. He complained about the discomfort of groveling in the snow to dig the coal out of the frozen pile. He consoled himself with the assertion that, within a few months, he would be sleeping on the grass. This forecast drew from the disgruntled print the amendment that, come Summer, Sam would sleep not on but under the grass.

Sam went into a coughing spell soon thereafter. A tincup half full of Old Crow was the suggested remedy. Sam demanded that it be diluted. Then, those present knew that Sam had had it. The printer's forecast came true.



# Random Recollection

OF

Jan 14, 1960

STANLEY G. SMITH

Many will remember Lester Jenner, commonly called "Silvey," and why. If anybody ever had two strikes on him when he went to bat, this boy "Silvey" did, but he came home AS a conquering hero during World War I.

As he grew up in Bulwinkle, "Silvey" played "hookey," marbles and baseball like others. That was at a time when kids picked up home made string balls as soon as they quit using nursing bottles. He was not sensational. No scouts ever looked him over, but he would catch without a mask. He had fortitude, with a capital G.

As an example, at one time when the creek was out all over the bottoms, some of us went out to look at the high water. Old Beau-coup was up almost to the floor of "The Iron Bridge," on the Du Quoin road. The current was swift, and the driftwood shot out beneath the bridge like speed boats. "Silvey," alone, considered it in order to go swimming. People fully clad felt chilly. The water, in addition to its hazards, must have been cold enough to freeze the trimmings off of a brass monkey. "In the altogether," "Silvey" clambered to the arched top of the superstructure and dived off, struggled back, and repeated the performance. He seemed to suffer no ill effect.

One would gather the impression that "Silvey" might have been afraid of the devil if His Satanic Majesty carried a three-pronged spear in each hand in place of only one, and had a few more spear-pointed tails, but under no other conditions.

By way of earning a livelihood, "Silvey" portered and shined shoes in the Cowens-Stump barbershop on Walnut street. One morning, when Jack Stump opened the cash drawer to put in a supply of change, he found a roll of bills that, he said, would choke a dog. He had emptied the till the night before, and that kind of money was entirely foreign to the business. He locked the drawer, awaiting the arrival of the senior partner, Bob Cowens.

Bob, like Jack, disclaimed ownership of that amount of ready money. Neither had an explanation. "Silvey" had the only other key. Jointly, they gave "Silvey" the third degree.

In due time it developed that the enterprising shine boy had obtained some information that was not, and is not, for circulation. He had cashed in on it. Court proceedings on a charge of black-mail, even with a guilty plea, would have created a scandal. Jack knew how to handle ticklish problems even before his vast experience with county fairs and city government.

"Silvey" promptly switched from scrubbing floors to swabbing decks for Uncle Sam. But, when a naval vessel docked in Australia, "Silvey" extended his shore leave indefinitely. Some letters came back from him, and he mailed home gifts of the then highly prized ostrich plumes--probably contraband. He did not forget the old home town.

World War I wore along. Men in uniform were commonplace. This observer saw a soldierly looking character alight from an I. C. passenger train one morning. The uniform was decked out with

Perry County Advocate, Pinckneyville, II

insignia that was unfamiliar, but a glance at the face rang a bell. The army officer, or so he appeared, made his way without hesitation, to a tall stool at the familiar rosewood counter of Peacock's place then in "The Wedge." That made it time to bend the elbow. A stool adjoining the newcomer was promptly occupied to enable perpetuation of an ancient custom. Close inspection revealed that the "officer" was none other than "Silvey," increased somewhat in stature, but unmistakably the lad who had been well known for years.

A friendly "Hi Silvey" brought a poker-faced stare, and the assurance that the man addressed was "Cap't. Elliott," of the British Army. The response was that he might be "Cap't. Elliott," Joe Doke, or Rip Van Winkle, but that he always had been "Silvey," and would stay that way. Thereupon, the one-man chance reception committee, correctly recognized, was told a story of the way the British won their part of the war. "An-Zac" soldiers, unfamiliar with the American sport of baseball, needed "Silvey" to instruct them in hurling hand grenades. No whizbang at throwing baseballs, and unfamiliar with the art of "tossing pineapples," expert testimony is not herein provided, but if ball players are the only good grenade throwers, no power would use them against the U. S. A.

"Silvey" made his way uptown to his old familiar haunts. He told all about his importance in the hostilities, and said that his return was to square the rap against him for peace-time desertion from the Navy. Patriotic citizens received him with open arms. They would have brought out the band if one was handy. For bond sales rallies in the Harriet theatre, crowds flocked in to hear "Cap't. Elliott" tell how skillfully he fielded sputtering grenades, and tossed them back unerringly to their source. He went over big. Horatio Alger could have spun no better yarn about the hometown boy who had made good.

As enthusiasm waned a bit, "Cap't. Elliott" invaded St. Louis. There, it was the same, only more so. Here, the papers were scanned carefully, and almost daily, stories told of the British officer's speeches, and how he was the guest of prominent citizens at the city's most fashionable and exclusive clubs.

"The paths of glory" sometimes lead only indirectly to the grave. The final news story about the distinguished visitor related that a committee of British government officials encountered "Cap't. Elliott" and removed all of the insignia he wore. They made it clear that they were not hero worshipers collecting souvenirs, but that they acted on orders. "Cap't. Elliott's" connection with the British armed forces, they asserted, existed only in the imagination of the boy from Bulwinkle.



# Random Recollection

OF

Jan 21, 1960

STANLEY G. SMITH

## THE DOG BUYER

Wars boost business. The war with Spain made the mule market flourish. Buyers invaded this area and bargained for allegedly halter broken mules. Farmers owning brood mares cashed in. Kids who raced down to the depot to watch troop trains pass thru had no mule colts to sell. But, seeing them herded in, lashed in groups of three or four, with improvised rope halters was ample evidence that they were in demand.

And, if there was so much demand for mules, it was not too hard to believe that dogs were also needed to whip the Sanpiards who reportedly had horns and spear-pointed tails. And, when the report that a dog buyer was coming was whispered in strict confidence, it just had to be so. The prevailing market was said to be a silver dollar for even a little pup, and up to five for a full grown hound. The buyer would be at the livery stable Saturday morning--sure--and with a satchel full of money.

Although cautioned not to let the information leak, it did seem in order to let a good buddy in on the money-making scheme, but unwise to tell others, unless you warned them not to tell. Too many dog collectors would make dogs hard to find.

Barns and woodsheds became hideouts for captured strays--perhaps including some that had not strayed far from home. Binder twine or assorted lengths of discarded sashcord served to tether the prized captives, pending arrival of the buyer.

And, at the appointed day and hour, ambitious youngsters, with dreams of miles and miles of licorice, at about two cents per yard, assembled with an assortment of muts, pooches, or just plain dogs in tow. The self-appointed local representative of the mythical dog merchant supervised assembling the array. They were hitched close up to a makeshift hitchrack, with a slipknot that would release without delay.

Then, pending arrival of the buyer, the promoter of the deal de-

cided to test the dogs. This examination, altho not so intended, could have served as an object lesson. It would have demonstrated what a professor of pharmacology might offer as a scholarly thesis on a common property of carbon disulphide and a resinous or viscid derivative of pine sap, known as turpentine. Both, applied externally, stimulate action.

Profound studies of external applications of these fluids on domestic animals reveal that, when applied so as to trickle from the base of the spine to the more sensitive area beneath the caudal appendage, either will stimulate immediate action. The psychological effect upon a canine specimen indicates that the discomfort experienced is associated with its location. The reaction indicates an urge to escape that location.

The tester of the dogs moved along the line of whimpering captives. From a big bottle containing one of the recognized stimulants, each dog was anointed liberally, in the prescribed manner. With the application of the treatment, the slipknots were jerked, and the howling pooches scattered.

To clarify, if in order: "Weevil dope" or turpentine, sometimes called "high-life" or "dogpush," under a dog's tail will make him take off like that bat out of the hot place.

No need to try it. It has been demonstrated.



# Random Recollection

OF

Jan 28, 1960

STANLEY G. SMITH

Let's Go Swimm'n

A signal made by raising the hand with the first two fingers spread apart now means "V-for-Victory." Churchill made it famous. In kindergarten circles it had another, urgent meaning. The higher held and the more frantically wig-wagged, the greater the urgency.

In other years, the two-fingersign meant "Let's go swimm'n!" To some, it was a challenge. To decline threatened condemnation as a "fraidy-cat," "panty-waist" or "sissy" sometimes called a "top-water." That lowered one's standing among all the regular guys. To accept, and get caught, might mean parental discipline. Some objected to their darling sons sneaking off to the creek to swim with a crowd of rowdies. Some parents are like that. Some didn't know, or care. Traditionally, "sand in the ears" would be dejected and accepted as prima facia evidence of a trip to the swimm'n' hole.

In hot weather, it took little effort to organize a swimming party. It was routine procedure. Many knew the paths worn to "The Kunze Hole," beyond "Bartle Hill," then mostly pasture. Beaucoup water looked more inviting then. Sewage moved nocturnally, in the "honey wagon."

When any gang approached the swimming hole, a race was underway. No prizes awaited winners, but a warning was issued that the last one in was "A red-headed niger baby," or some such monstrosity.

It took only seconds to remove a hickory hat, pull a shirt off over the head, step out of jeans or overalls and plunge in. What would have happened if anyone wore trunks is problematical. Knotted sleeves and pant-legs punished less heights transgressions.

Participants in this summer sport varied widely in aquatic skill. Some just waded around where the water was a little less than waist deep. And, there were always sturdy lads who proudly walked the

bank. Some were real water dogs. They stayed in until they turned blue with cold. Herman Bloom lacked speed on land, due to effects of polio, but he asked no odds at swimming. He kicked his underdeveloped legs in a frog-like motion, and he could hold his own with all comers in a water battle.

One summer, the Kunze hole gang became ambitious. They rigged a trolley ride from a tall tree to the deep water. A cable was strung across the creek. A pulley, from someone's sliding door, was hooked over it, and there was a rope to hang to and ride over the water and drop off. Harry Strait, medium sized, tried it first. It worked. A supreme test of strength suggested was for Barret ("Bat") Gruner to ride it. Even then, "Bat" had the heft of a big-time tuba player. The cable held until his portly form slid down to a point directly above a big log at the creek bank. It looked like "Bat" had hit too hard, but he recovered. The trolley project was promptly abandoned.

There was a trace of Little Rock in the sentiment of Kunze Hole habitués. Charlie Pippin tried to join. His clothing forthwith became a mess of moistened knots. Missiles flew. The intruder took over thru knee high corn dressed like he was when some colored "granny" had announced "It's a boy." How he made it home remains a mystery.

"The Grape Vine" was for those who lived in "Oklahoma." Many will recall its location--well downstream from Kaiser's foot bridge and above "Yallerbanks Ford." Unsponsored visitors just might get into a fist fight there, Oklahoma youngsters were held in high repute as scrappers. It was rumored that even little kids there carried wash boiler handles in their pockets in lieu of store-boughten brass knucks.

Life-guard service on Beaucoup was purely voluntary. When needed, it functioned. A befuddled recollection of one such episode. One would-be "Tarzan" in a tree observed a struggling swimmer "going" down for the third time. He sounded the alarm. Two strong swimmers raced to the rescue. Of many races witnessed since, not one has been more gratifying. By way of artificial respiration, the frail, limp, water-logged form was draped, face down over a convenient log, and rocked to pump the water out and air in. It worked, or someone else would have had to fill this space.



## Random Recollection

OF Feb. 4, 1960

STANLEY G. SMITH

### 'lectric lights

One was hung high between two tall poles where Douglas street ends at Mulberry. That was the first that this observer encountered in his stick-horse travels. All of the wisdom gained in a lifetime that had then extended no less than four long years failed. What it was for was a problem that needed a solution.

At intervals along the street, between the ditch and the wooden sidewalk, men had dug deep holes, set poles, and strung wires from one pole to another. They lead to that mysterious object swinging over the street at the corner, high enough to clear a man on top of a wagon load of hay.

Other observers of the local scene, as experienced and sagacious, could provide no logical solution. Reports came in that this strange operation was underway all around town. Exploratory journeys in various directions revealed that the poles were going up and that wires connected them, just as far as stick horses could carry the investigators. The big round things, pointed at the top and flared out at the bottom, were being hung at many of the street corners. No one seemed sure why.

After due deliberation, it was agreed that the big metal cones did look a little like bells, but not much. But, after all, they looked more like bells than anything suggested. So, they had to be bells. From this, there developed a theory that the wires strung along the streets were to serve as bell cords, and that someone would pull on them and ring bells all over town. That, we thought, would really be something.

Some may have tried, but how would one explain to little tots that there was a new brick building with a tall steel smokestack down by the O. K. mill, where some one would make a magic something that would follow the wires and make bright lights shine from the strange objects hanging over the street corners--something called electricity.

In due time, solution came. The street corners were illuminated. Stores and some homes had little glass gadgets swinging from the ceiling that made much brighter lights than our own coal oil lamps.

Mr. Kohlenberger no longer made his rounds, carrying his step ladder and his can of oil, and rags, to service the coal oil street lamps. It was no longer on this observer's schedule to watch that faithful public servant service that utility. One was on top of a tall post near the Louie Weingarth place, on Mulberry, not far from the alley--excuse, Murphy street. Another swung beneath the porch in front of Major Luther Kugler's "New Store." Anyway, the sign said "New Store." These street lamps looked much bigger than the ones at home.

But, Mr. Cull, the wizard of the electric system, made his rounds to put new carbons in the street lamps. He came well laden with a leather satchel full of carbons and a coil of rope whereby the lamp was lowered to shoulder height. Then, the burned carbons were removed and tossed aside to be replaced with new ones. The discarded, sometimes removed when still hot, were worth scrambling for. Until the burned ends were worn away, they served as crude pencils, and were prized possessions.

To go beyond a vague, fuzzy, rambling recollection of impressions that have rusted in this mental garret since the early part of the "gay nineties," a little research helps. No less an authority than that of the "Honolulu Correspondent," Percy B. Smith, came thru as always. No well kept card index file can beat him at coming up details.

Percy recalled that, in 1893, the electric system was developed. Such civic leaders as Dr. H. P. Huntsinger and T. S. ("Bess") Campbell, with some Du Quoin support, organized the company. The power plant stood on the triangular tract that Twin-County Service Co. now occupies, between Kaskaskia street and the railroad track. Just in time to celebrate the advent of electricity in Pinckneyville, Percy recalls, Fred Murphy's Concert Band made its debut. More must be dug up and rehashed about that great institution and its contribution to the community.

And, from no less an authority than George Benedict, it is asserted that the light plant created a byproduct of value in the form of cinders. Local teamsters, George recalls, rose early to acquire, at no cost, a wagon load of cinders--loaded the hard way. Hauled as directed to chug holes in the street, and there duly dumped and spread, a load that had cost the teamster absolutely nothing at the plant became worth a sixty-cent order on the city treasurer, or, less 10% finance charge, 54¢ worth of groceries.

And, Chas. Bischof comes thru with information that the addition of electricity to the charms of the community inspired this literary gem: "Pinckneyville is out of sight, water works and 'lectric lights--ta-ra-ra bom-de-aye--and repeat."

Then, some ten years or so after the community began to enjoy the blessings of electricity--at night--the plant caught fire. Whether the team that tried to pull the fire wagon to the blaze was too light for the task of the mud holes too deep may be another undissolved dispute, but that Sunday night the lights slowly faded out--and oil lamps and lanterns were again in demand.



## Random Recollection

OF

Feb 11, 1940

STANLEY G. SMITH

### WALNUT STREET FIRE

An agonizing screech of terror shattered the silence of the sultry summer night--well, maybe it was not quite that dramatic, but Old Lady Shannon had her head out of the second story window bel-  
lowing to the cockeyed world that the place was on fire and that she wanted help to get t'ell out of there.

That was the first that any knew about that Walnut street fire that messed things up from Dr. Emmet ("Possum") Peyton's drugstore, just north of the carriage works, on up the street to the barbershop, and caused a lot of loss and damage.

That woman left screaming for help should be rescued about here, but just who got her down a ladder is not quite clear. Maybe the hero who never claimed the medal had no alibi for being out that late. She lived above the Fred Beck store, until the fire. No further information about her comes to mind.

But, that fire was one to be remembered. Old newspaper files would reveal who all lost what, or thereabouts, but the sad parts of the story fade from the memory faster than do recollections of the crazy things that happened. This may illustrate the ability to take reverses with a smile, or, it might be a perverted sense of humor to recall only the fun that some enjoyed that night of horror and disaster.

It must have been about 1909 or 10--and somewhere near July 4, because the Peyton drugstore displayed fireworks in the south show window. While the late Valley, "Eagle" McDonald, pharmacist of the establishment, supervised removal of such chemicals as might explode and hurt someone, a volunteer offbearer attempted to carry out the skyrockets, Roman candles, sparklers, giant crackers and assorted explosives displayed. The canvas curtain, wound up on its long round poll at the edge of the wooden awning had burned just enough to fall on the self-appointed fireworks removal committee. That store, and Peyton's dental office, upstairs, burned completely. Beck's store, next door north, was also a total loss.

At that time, when the fire bell clanged, the populace assembled. Some helped. Some hindered. Patrons and friends of the then popular Bob Cowens-Jack Stump barber shop, which was in no critical danger, removed everything that could be pried loose except the ornamental top of the heating stove stored in the back room. Cowens wondered why they hadn't scraped the paper from the walls.

Robert, ("Irish") Davis had a place of business in that area. In the front, he sold cigars and such. Knights of The Round Table may have assembled in the rear to speculate upon the probabilities of the possibilities at times. And, "Irish" had a portable peanut roaster and corn popper. He was late in answering the fire alarm. His popcorn wagon was gone. He asked someone where it was, and was informed that it had circled the square on two wheels, disappeared over creamery hill, and was probably someplace up about Swanwick creek bottoms and still going.

The C. C. Hoffman furniture store was seriously messed up, and some furniture may have burned--up where, without sounding h's, he said he kept thin mattresses on the third floor. Vacant business places were promptly rented by the enterprising merchant, that night, and used furniture was shipped in by the carload. A flashy 24x36 in. poster advertised a fire sale for many miles around.

Just how much loss and damage Elias K. Kane sustained that night is uncertain. But, it was not enough to put a crimp in his inexhaustible supply of courtesy, diplomacy, tact and good humor. In front of the jewelry store, there stood a sign, indicative of the business. A big clock, with dials facing both north and south, was mounted at the top of a tall and decidedly substantial post. It must have been about 10x10 inches, and some ten feet tall. The clock was correct twice daily--at 8:22 1/2--and that left room for the inscription--"E. K. Kane--Jeweler." The base of the wooden clock was a hollow socket that fitted neatly over the long-seasoned whiteoak post.

One M. M. Merrick--one was enough--had good intentions, no doubt, but may have been a bit shy on good judgement. Anyway, he felt called upon to save this clock from destruction. His way was to procure a fire department axe and chop the big oak post down to remove the sign. The axe had one purpose only. It was to look pretty on the side of the big red hook-and-ladder wagon. It might cut hot butter, if forcefully applied. This Merrick was about as husky as a diabetic refugee from a TB ward, and had never been a tiehacker in his life. But, he banged away heroically at the task he had assigned himself.

Observing this neighborly undertaking, Mr. Kane, doubtless appreciative of the heroic effort underway, was much too courteous to interrupt it. He may have felt that Merrick needed exercise. But, a man who could shake a watch up in a sack and put it together again, and could fit you with a pair of specks, could make lightning calculations. He soon computed, from the thin slivers of wood that the ornamental tool scaled off of the near-petrified pillar, that the sign would fall late Friday afternoon. Thereupon, he quietly procured a chair, mounted it, removed the clock and slowly walked away. Someone stopped Merrick about breakfast time.



## Random Recollection

OF

Feb. 18, 1960

STANLEY G. SMITH

"Old Bismark"

Behind his back, some called him "Old Bismark." To all, he was a respected and colorful character known as "Uncle Gus" Wangelin. He, like many of his day, held a high regard for men of prominence in the history of the "The Old Country." That was before one of the Hohenzollern boys, called Wilhelm, became prominent in world affairs. But, Uncle Gus was just as loyal as they came. He kept the G. A. R. alive.

Time was when Wangelin had a lumber yard in the Woodside garage area, west side of Mill street and adjoining the railroad. And, he had a public scale. Some say that when they wrecked his little dingy office, long abandoned, they found a jug of dimes he had collected as scale fees, and forgotten. But then, that many dimes would encrust with foam, unnumbered times, the pink mustache that Wangelin wore. Call the next witness.

Windsor hotel, in its days of glory, would not have been the same without its major-domo, "Uncle Gus." There, they served meals--and what meals--on schedule. When dinner--yes, dinner, not lunch, was ready, around noon, Gus announced it. To do this, he strutted, even if he shuffled, out onto the walk beneath the wooden awning. There he would beat a rythmical tatoo upon a big, round, shield-like copper gong. Changing of the guard at Windsor Palace was no greater show of pomp and ceremony.

The old Windsor hotel register belongs in some museum. It preserved the artistic skill that "Uncle Gus" displayed as clerk of that then far-famed hostelry. A hotel guest then wrote his name--or a name--in a book, mounted on a rotating base. When "Uncle Gus" headed up each page with the day and date, he performed a work of art. He was a past master with a pen.

For all the holidays on the calendar, Gus would really strut his stuff. He penned appropriate designs--such as a strutting turkey gobbler for Thanksgiving Day--floral wreaths and stacked muskets for May 30--Three marching men, with fife and drum and a headache for July 4--Santa and a bag of toys for Dec., 25, etc. For these productions, he would break out the red ink too, and come up with two-color jobs.

Aside from his hotel duties Wangelin's activities centered around May 30 and military funerals. He held the offices of Major James P. Cowens Post of the G. A. R., consecutively or simultaneously. No worthy comrad was denied the honor due him so long as Gus could brush up his old campaign hat and conduct the services.

It is recalled that word came here of the death, in Murphysboro, of L. T. Ross, once prominent here, but then almost forgotten. Plans called for burial in Old Du Quoin cemetery. The cortege, enroute by rail from Murphysboro to Du Quoin, would be here for an 8:00 to 10:00 a. m. layover between trains, (224 and 605.) This L. T. Ross was "Uncle Len" to me--and, like the man without tobacco that they sang about, he too was an old soldier and he had a wooden leg. Wangelin willingly accepted the task of directing the military ceremonies and called upon Du Quoin comrades to participate. When these comrades tended to demure, due to a lack of a quorum, Adj. Wangelin asserted that Comrad Ross would get a military ceremony if he had to do it by himself.

The assembly at graveside right well knew that L. T. Ross had served his flag and country.

When veterans of this day and time fire their salute May 30, to some of us, at least one of the three loud bangs is for the memory of men like "Uncle Gus." Some of us saw their ranks thin out and entirely disappear--and there are no more just like them.



## Random Recollection

OF

STANLEY G. SMITH

### "Early Returns"

Current changes in the local scene awaken memories of other days. Workmen wrecking the frame portion of Windsor hotel would hear many entertaining stories if the old walls would talk.

One undoubtedly unauthorized excursion to that area was on the night of the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, 1896. The intruder among grown men and older boys then proudly wore a frowzy dark blue cap. It bore an insignia, in gold letters, "McKinley and Hobart." Other lads, then considered decidedly misguided, wore caps of rebel grey. They read, in silver, "Bryan and Stevenson."

Ordinarily, a second-grader would not be too much concerned about election returns. But, some learned their A B C's from a blue-backed, cutleaf indexed pollbook. The TV reports of what had happened that day would not be in for about half a century or so. It was, therefore, in order to brave the dangers of a trip to "the levee" where the returns were to be available.

By some connivance, a wire that tapped the Western Union service lead to a table in the Windsor office or lobby. A telegraph instrument was installed on a pinochle table. Wm. T., or maybe it was S. S. Ritchey, who sat in to interpret the dots and dashes. R. M. Harry, a Southerner, with the wicked wit of a traveling salesman, acted as announcer. A goodly crowd was there. Some supported their forecasts of results with folding money. Tommy O'Rief had not yet come along to advance and uphold the theory that gambling was illegal on "the levee."

Scattered, incomplete and perhaps meaningless returns from eastern cities soon trickled in. Ritchey scribbled figures on a memo pad. Harry called out the information, loud and clear. Some

cheered. Some swore. Then, out of plain cussedness, a bulletin was announced that would indicate a Democratic landslide in Pennsylvania. That was all that some could take.

The crowd packed in the office began to mill about. Those outside tried pushing in. A first class rhubarb was brewing fast. Ed. Fisher was irked, or figured it was time to break up the party. With a quick twist, he dislodged the offending telegraph instrument, pushed his way to the open double doors, and hurled it over the heads of the mass of men outside. This observer of events then slithered thru the mob and hastened homeward without any worthwhile information.

Whether the man in the White House would be the benign and some thought saintly Wm. McKinley or the oratorical, and, some thought, irrational Wm. Jennings Bryan, was still uncertain. Prevalence of a strong central government, a high protective tariff, the gold standard and the promised full dinner pail, was still in doubt. Might be states' rights, free trade, tariff for revenue only and the free and unlimited coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1. Just what these things meant was unimportant. They all sounded good, or evil.

But, the news did come thru in due time. No celebration since has seemed to be such a whing-ding as the Republicans threw that year. They called it a "Ratification Celebration," advertised with big crowing rooster pictures. There must have been some campaign funds left over, or some may have won substantial bets. At each corner of the square, big high rail pens were erected to confine big bonfires. The official fireworks display was touched off from a flat-bed wagon on Water Street. Down near Bill Schoch's blacksmith shop, somebody fired an anvil at intervals. And, as fast as Jake Hepp could hand them out, celebraters shot firecrackers and Roman candles.

One who then could right well distinguish difference in the taste of defeat and victory supplied this participant with fireworks abundantly. It may have seemed strange then. It does not now.



# Random Recollection

OF

Mar 3, '96

STANLEY G. SMITH

## "And There Was Light"

This edition has to be a joint production. To revive memories of the town band that made its first appearance when electric lights were first turned on, this recollector called for help.

There are forty-nine other states, and countless foreign lands, with lots of people in them--there may be some folks on Mars, and elsewhere. But, only in the fiftieth state, and in the card-index file memory of Percy B. Smith, there still remains a roster of the celebrated Fred Murphy band.

In Honolulu, without reference works, Percy, with his pipe purring properly, has come up with this:

"Pinckneyville's first electric street lights appeared in Spring of 1893. The event was marked by the first appearance on the streets of Murphy's Cornet Band. The band, mostly beginners, had practiced for months in the court house, under instruction of Fred Murphy, (no relation to the banking family.) They marched to the southwest corner of the square, and at the first roll of the drums the lights came on, to the delight of a large crowd."

"This band, in addition to the leader, included Ed. W. ("Dick") Gordon, Elmer Brown, George W. Leslie, George Campbell, Willard Peyton, Joe "Bidley" Mueller, Arthur C. Smith, Percy B. Smith, James Campbell, Thos. E. Turner and Henry Maasberg."

P. B. has added that Will Wallace and Willis Hawkins were also drummers later. And, he asserts, in that year, the band played at the Benton and Marion fairs--which would be big-time engagements.

It is a good bet that no one else could come up with this information, if any care. And, of the "charter members," no doubt Percy B. is "The Last of the Mohicans." More power to him.

To take it from here, Murphy is not called a director, he was the instructor and the leader. He doubtless patted his foot and swung his silver-plated cornet, but he also blew heck out of it.

Some might dig out the old family album, now a little mangy and moth eaten, and find photographs that bear the Murphy Studio imprint. He operated upstairs on Walnut street--about the Dunn Shoe Store and Shop location, along where Dale Bibby functions now. He had the first penthouse around--a darkroom erected on the roof. We called it his hoghouse. There is photographic evidence that the

writer watched anxiously for the little bird that was supposed to flutter out from under the black cloth.

Murphy's entertainment enterprises, in addition to the band, included "Murphy Concert Company" and "Murphy Comedy Company." He must have been quite a promoter. These outfits contributed to the cultural development of the community, and to the gaiety of the "Gay 90's."

This, then justifiably, childish mind, retains some impressions of the entertainment in which his older brothers and a cousin, "Big Dick," participated. And, some legends have been handed down that may be worth recording. Anyway, one without talent likes to boast a bit about the ones who have it.

Next week--Comedy?

8:  
1  
10  
V  
SI  
E  
E



# Random Recollection

OF

STANLEY G. SMITH

Murphy Comedy Company

Dramatic critics on the "Broadway" beat, here early in the '90s, would report that Murphy Comedy Company "packed'em in" at Murphy Hall.

For those who tuned in later, it may be well to explain that the comedy company was developed by Fred Murphy, the bandmaster. The hall was owned by another Murphy, W. K. Only as the area's outstanding figure in finance, industry, commerce, agriculture, harness racing, governmental affairs and such, could W. K. Murphy claim distinction. He never blew a horn.

Murphy Hall, the room above the post office, was then a glam-

orous fairyland, with brilliant chandeliers supporting coal oil lamps. Other auditoriums may have been more pretentious, but then this "theater" was the best there was. Little tots who made the grade to appear there in church or school entertainments enjoyed as great a thrill as comes to actors who arrive on Broadway.

Most of the troupers who took bows in these Murphy performances in the hall "doubled in brass" with Murphy's Cornet Band. But, the troupe also contained vocalists who could strum a mandoline, a banjo or guitar. From the top-twenty of the times, these performers picked such late hits as "After the Ball," "Only a Bird in a Gilded Cage," and such sentimental ballads. Or, they could "wow'em" with the roundelay about "The Animal Fair," the hill-billy type "Sippin' Cider Thru a Straw," and others. The treble tremelo quaver of the shouting tenor and the rain barrel bellows of the basso-profundo could vibrate the shiny tin reflectors of the kerosene footlights--and draw tears or belly laughs from the patrons.

Murphy booked engagements for the band, tied in with night entertainments, all over Southern Illinois. This, it seems, at times took some conniving. It may be safe to reveal one such incident. 'Twas July 4th, the story goes, and Murphy contracted for a band of so many pieces to play at Mt. Vernon, and booked the comedy company for a night performance. Came time for the band to march out on parade and "bally" on the square for a ball game. Two bandmen, perhaps so patriotic that they started celebrating on the third, were unable to perform. The resourceful Murphy had to have the stipulated number in the band. Tom Baxter and Elmer G., ("Cap") Smith, proficient "stringband" men and balladeers, were drafted, taught how to march and carry horns and to make like they were blowing them. An imported bigtime ballplayer, also a musician of note, took particular interest in Baxter's performance with a little "peckhorn," and admonished him about such strenuous efforts beneath the blazing sun. Baxter couldn't blow a note, but he could sing any time.

Arthur C. Smith, (many called him "Acey,") could tripple-tongue with the best of them, and he could clown it up, upon occasion. He played a flock of ochorenas, or "sweetpotatoes," in assorted sizes, but, pictures indicate he hid behind burnt cork makeup for this routine. And, being the kind that could make music out of anything, he had another specialty--billed as the "Drunken Musician." Bandmen left their instruments on stage to take a break. A. C. would drag in a "prop" case of beer. In turn, he tried each of the instruments, and, when a sour note emerged, he sought solace at the beer case. In pantomime, he "killed" one for each instrument, and lined up the "dead soldiers," until the case was obviously empty. The bottles contained various quantities of water,

bore seared marks, and, when lined up the way that they belonged, they formed an inexpensive xylophone. He had a pair of hammers handy, and would beat the holy 'll out of them. (The bottles were left around to prove this.)

And, they staged a specialty that presented the ponderous tuba player, Ed. W. ("Dick") Gordon as a butcher, making sausage. They had a big "prop" sausage grinder that clattered when Gordon turned a crank. Sausage emerged, prestuffed and tied in links. Gordon spoke no lines, but indicated that he was peeved when a little dog trotted into the "shop." The dog was quickly captured and dropped into the sausage grinder--and the "hot dogs" came out thru a spout. That was comedy?

Then, the diminutive, beginner cornet player, doubling as a shoeshine boy, with a shine kit swinging from his shoulder, insisted upon patronage from the butcher. Thereupon, the butcher grabbed the "street urchin" by the collar, and unceremoniously deposited his squirming figure in the sausage maker, spun the crank, and garnered a string of over-size "hot dogs."

The boy that started blowing a cornet in 1893 has "been thru the mill" in many ways--but never came out as sausage--or any other kind of "meat-head." Although all others of that then famous troupe are gone, the one that played, "the shineboy" now takes his ease as the "Honolulu Correspondent," Percy B.



## Random Recollection

OF *Mar. 12, 1960*

STANLEY G. SMITH

### Fire Department Milestones

Some time, some other old coot may reminisce about the time they laid new water mains and erected a water tower that changed the skyline on "The Levee." This current worthy project is just another milestone on the long lane the water system and fire protection has progressed since the days of bucket brigades.

Someone with a longer, better, memory might explain how fire alarms were sounded before the tall frame firehouse was erected on Walnut street, and the big new bell was duly inaugurated. It may be a hazy view thru "the mists of antiquity," or perchance the result of watching too many "Westerns" but there appears a vision of a big steel wagon tire suspended from a timber framework, with a big hammer tethered to it, whereby one could assemble the populace by beating on the tire as on a triangle in a northwoods lumber camp at "chow-time." That would have been back of an old blacksmith shop, and not far from the rear of "Temperance Hall." Right? --or nuts?

The night the new fire station was accepted by the city council-- Mayor J. L. "Uncle Joe" Murphy, probably, presiding, was a big night on Walnut street. The building, maybe thirty feet high, over all, seemed as tall as is the present water tower on about the same location. (It was called Doc. Mead's Teakettle by some dissenters when erected.) The building housed the fire equipment, with the tower big enough to hang the hose to dry.

As the contractor who had completed the building, W. G. Wilson was doubtless justly proud of the accomplishment, he successfully bid five dollars for the honor of being first to ring the big new bell. Then, five dollars--what crap shooters called "a fi-case note," was pronounced with awe and reverence.

Some ambitious administration established two sub-stations for the fire department. One was deep in Oklahoma. It provided one of the high-wheeled hose carts and a bell on a tall pole. Another hose cart occupied a shed just west of The Windsor. It is not recalled that there was any fire bell for "The Levee" station. But,

there, and at that time, there were doubtless those about who were equipped to apply the Western method. As Damon Runyon would say it, they could "Up with the rooty-toot-toot," and trigger off three distinct blasts of a 44.

In the pre-firetruck era, rules were that the first team available pulled the hose cart. The one that placed would pull the hook-and-ladder wagon if needed. Teamsters and their horses had sporting blood in their veins. The fee--perhaps \$2--meant something in the lives of teamsters when two dollars was two dollars. The first clang started real "hossracing."

There is a legend that one team, schooled in the rules, was sedately drawing the hearse when the alarm sounded. Respect for the departed is one thing, but, after all, a horse race is a horse race.

And, there was a big, rawboned, fleabitten grey, named Henry, who had been a strong contender for hose-cart honors when in his prime. And, like too many of us, he found it hard to realize that he had had it. When he had become a "smooth-mouth,"--How does that jingle go--"They longer grow, extend before, 'till twenty when we know no more?" Anyway, Old Henry had been relegated to the plow, in the St. Bruno Cemetery area. But, when the wind was right, he would hear the challenge of the fire alarm. Thereupon, on splayed-out hooves, and spavined legs, Old Henry lumbered in to town--attempt to perform his duty.

A remnant of the old horse-drawn hose carts remains. A high wheel from one of them graces the alley fence at the Curt Gruner home. Curt should come up with a good yarn about it.

"The Judge and The Governor," here next week.



## Random Recollection

OF Mar 24, 1960-

STANLEY G. SMITH

### "The Judge and The Governor"

Cherished customs and time-honored traditions must make way for progress. Horse racing thru city streets to determine what team hauled the hose cart had to stop. But, it took the teamwork of "The Governor" and "The Judge" to bring an end to it. They were assigned to that important task, on a permanent, full-time basis.

These steeds were not Thoroughbreds with a capital-T. They could not boast of recorded pedigrees as long as the proverbial barn door. But, in this book, they were lower case thoroughbreds as they excelled in wisdom, stamina, courage and nobility of character. These attributes were not inbred but were attained from one who had such sterling qualities, their devoted master trainer, A.G. (Grant) Campbell. He knew how.

Campbell's busy blacksmith shop had an open doorway into the spick-and-span fire station. There, in the rear, Judge and Governor were at home to many admirers. In big box stalls, and fetlock deep in bright, clean straw, they took their ease, but continuously paid the standard price for safety--eternal vigilance. Remindful of impending urgent duty, bridle bits dangled handily beside their mouths when they awaited fire alarms, or training.

In front of them stood the glistening red firewagon. It looked alive and poised for action, from the spring-supported tongue to the foot-board at the rear, where twin nozzles stood erect and glowed like crown jewels. And, up front, what firehouse parlance called "drop harness" was so suspended that a quick yank on a slipknot dropped it into place, instantaneously.

When a fire alarm came in, Campbell, the blacksmith, vanished. Fire Chief Campbell was in action when the leather apron hit the floor. With the fire bell clangor started, Campbell had other strings to pull. One yank raised the barriers that served as the stall doors. Judge and Governor then bounced out to take their places beneath the suspended harness. "Stan the Man," at his best, could not flash back to first in his trick pickoff play any quicker.

Another yank and the harness descended. Mechanical perfection plus practised hands developed synchronized precision and amazing speed. Flashing fingers snapped the bits, ho'back straps, collar-and-hames and bellybands in place. The driver vaulted over taunt, pre-toggled tugs to take his seat and kick the gong that said "let's

go." The whole fire-fighting outfit then shot thru the door like that condemned bat, or like Beans Again, Lillian up, when Dr. Quillman sprang the latch. And, they could romp to any corner of the city in what seemed like nothing, flat.

How much patience and what ingenuity it took to develop such perfection in fire protection only seasoned firefighters would know. All could see and appreciate only a part of it. After long hours at the anvil, Chief Campbell had to perform another chore. Chore? No--it looked like play. In the quite of the evening, Campbell, perched proudly on the driver's seat, would promenade down Walnut, perhaps around the square, with Judge and Governor stepping high, but champing at the bits. In some residential section, he would push on the reins, kick the gong and let them breeze a quarter. That legged them up and helped maintain their wind and stamina.

That team could and did deliver--along with the many unsung heroes of local fire department personnel--and there are none better. A check of old files will reveal that, late one near-zero night, with a four-buckle layer of "The Beautiful" (?) on the ground, a blaze in a near vacant house well back in "Black Hills" was put out before the earmarks of a "touchoff" were destroyed. Colorful, and for available facilities, decidedly efficient, fire-fighting in the horse-drawn days drew admiration. Now, when the the siren sounds, if the bedroom wall feels cool, and the scent of smoke comes only from the dottle in the ashtray, sleep returns. Come morning, someone may know what was afire, briefly, maybe miles away. The best of facilities, and the personnel that teaches others how, are at the service of the community. And, more power to them--in the water mains.







# Random Recollection

OF

STANLEY G. SMITH

## PAUL'S CONCERT BAND

Harrison Mc Dunn, retired florist, Plant City, Florida, merits an assist on an attempt to recall memories of N. M. Paul's Concert Band. It functioned here when this century was young, and of its membership, only a few survive. A reunion of them now might look like an assembly in some old folks' home. But when the band was started, few, if any, on the roster were old enough to shave.

Harry can recall that the band room was located on the east side of the square and later moved to the historic Murphy Hall where another generation of musicians had performed.

Like the band master in a TV cigarette commercial, Paul was a local merchant who took up musical instruction as a hobby. He started from scratch with lads then bordering on highschool age and without any prior experience. "Nick Paul's Kid Band" was the less dignified but more descriptive name of the struggling institution in which the community took great pride.

Harry recalls how he and others struggled desperately with simple little exercises that, for weeks, would go in sweet but come out "blaw," in spite of all that they could do. He tells of seeing Barret, ("Bat") Gruner wave a little "peck" horn high above his head triumphantly. He had played his way clear thru an exercise without a blue note. Later, Gruner was assigned to the bass horn, and he had the torso for it. He went "Pro.," and trouped with a famous circus band until ill health ended his career.

George Vortiede, (then "Tody Fourthreader" to admiring friends,) mastered the drums and clarinet. Joe Fox became a French horn player. Both became army band men and thereby doubtless escaped more arduous military service.

Howard, ("Doc") Sims, perhaps the smallest member of the outfit, played snare drum and doubled as an aerial performer. The band needed a touch of showmanship. So, an "iron-jaw" act was developed. "Doc" was fitted up with a costume somewhat like that of "Superman." It included a long, flowing, shimmery white scarf that was useful as well as ornamental. A cable was rigged between

tall poles with a little trolley gadget fastened to it. Called "Prof. Gonzales," the man with the iron jaw, "Doc" was introduced as the death-defying performer who would make the slide for life supported by his teeth. Some harness maker had provided a shoulder-strap arrangement with a snap whereby the daring performer could place what weight he had upon his shoulders and relieve his teeth. He hid the substitution beneath the fluttering scarf. The act drew Ohs and Ahs and plaudits of the admiring spectators.

Came World War I--The Big War--and Sims made the navy band, as did Jim Thetford. Jimmie, as Harry recalls, had a hard time getting started, like the others. When he tried to turn in his horn and call it quits, Paul found that persuasion failed, but that calling Jim a quitter worked. Thetford kept on trying and was soon first-chair cornet. These naval bandmen plied the Atlantic many times and doubtless got some breaks that would have been denied them but for "Nick" Paul's patient efforts.

There may have been others who struggled under Paul's instruction and made music more than a diversion. Some joined bands that functioned later. Harry Dunn, Henry and Roy Sledger, Clyburn Rackley, Rene Malan, Walter Sims--and doubtless many more helped entertain the public. And, especially when all dolled up in their snappy band uniforms, they rated, socially, several notches higher than the lads who lacked the talent or ambition.

Next week, let's follow the band to Vergennes.



## Random Recollection

OF

*April 14/1960*

STANLEY G. SMITH

*Recd #120*

### Board for Vergennes

John C. Dintleman, in his diversified career, sojourned for some time in the then thriving village of Vergennes. That was when Paul's Concert Band was in the height of such glory as it attained. These facts, plus Dintleman's inclination and ability as a booster and promoter, made memorable a celebration staged at Vergennes one blistering Fourth of July.

Dintleman left his imprint where he functioned. The local Halo'-ween parade, now a long established classic, was primarily his brain-child in the beginning. Operating some mercantile establishment in Vergennes could not hamper the showmanship of that worthy representative of this community.

The celebration mapped out for that long-remembered occasion was like a three-ring circus. No one could take in all the entertainment offered. The top attraction was the appearance of the juvenil band, with the high-light of its performance the daring "Slide-for-Life" act of Howard, ("Doc") Simms, the little drummer boy. That stunt had been tried out in advance here, on Walnut street, and, thanks to "props" that made it only look like a real "iron jaw" act, "Doc" survived to perform before a larger and more enthusiastic audience. To them, he was not just "Doc" Sims, but "Prof. Gonzales," as billed. He went over big. And, the band had a limited but well rehearsed repertoire to bring out continuously.

As attractions for sports lovers in the assembly, Pinckneyville and Du Quoin played ball, winner take all, and Pinckneyville took. And, in those days, John H. R. Stump, later mayor, was considering offers to perform as a professional clay pigeon shot. So, Dintleman rigged up a trap-shoot. Jack, and perhaps others also near "pros," competed. Results were about like one would expect now if Dave Huggins and Lowell Crumbacker entered a match with just plain ordinary marksmen. Such as saw fit to wager on the results, from a local viewpoint, reportedly "got well."

When the band assembled on the I. C. platform to make the trip on No. 205, about 10:00 a. m., the boys were all decked out in brand new uniforms. Caps, blouses and trousers were, for the moment, as white as the proverbial driven snow. Leggings, belts, capbands and visors were of a glossy black artificial leather. It would be called plastic now. That man Putnam, who made that fadeless dye, had no part in making the black trimmings.

The train ride, with coach windows open, just behind a smoke and cinder belching locomotive, was of no help to the appearance of the snow white apparel. From the Vergennes depot, the outfit strutted proudly thru deep dust to the park--so called. The shade trees there were immature. The protection they provided from the searing sun was like unto that which a barbed wire fence would *cc*. It was so hot the soda pop was luke warm.

Along with the perspiring musicians, innocent bystanders also suffered. Girl friends that went along and stuck close to the musicians were the flappers, pont-tails or bobby-soxers of that *cc* mod. That was back when legs were limbs and were concealed in heavy ribbed black stockings. Some wore peek-a-boo shirt waists. They suffered sunburns, more serious in the peek than in the a-boo areas of their backs and shoulders. Terrific heat, exertion and excitement created copious amounts of honest sweat. It made black ink of the dye that made the leggings, belts and trimmings look like patent leather. Returning, the band was a right well bedraggled lot. The sorry looking uniforms would have challenged the detergent commercials of today that show a score or more washing machines in action.

Dintleman related another feature that right well illustrated the effect of the terrific heat. The late and much lamented George Curtis, of Du Quoin--greatest "Rube Comedian" of all time, bar none--had made a deal to stage a tent show on the grounds. At that time, the Curtis show was not exactly flourishing. Curtis had a tent and a complete outfit stored. In Du Quoin, he could recruit a cast of talented troupers on a moment's notice. He confessed that he was a little short on working capital and was not too sure that he could pay any privilege fee. Dintleman invited Curtis to drive on in with his outfit, set up and see what he could do. That night, the account continued, George came in with a nice fat roll of bills and ironed off handsomely. "Shucks," George said, "It wasn't because they liked the show--they just paid to get in out of the sun."

### GIRL SCOUT TROOP 140 MEETING

Girl Scout Troop 140 met and the president called the meeting to order. We said the pledge and

promise. We collected dues and made dolls out of yarn. We then had refreshments from the nibble box and then we were dismissed.

Scribe  
Susan Lykins



## Random Recollection

April 21, 1964

OF

STANLEY G. SMITH

### "Chicken Lifter?"

"Doc" Bigsby was consistent. Year after year, he would affirm, with profound solemnity, that he was eighty-four. And, he was justly proud that he possessed the stamina of a man of about half that age--which he was.

Bigsby needed strength to ply his trade. A construction laborer or hod carrier, in his unmechanized day, exerted stupendous foot-poundage of energy. Sand, from 'Possum Branch,' via Chris. Schoch, or from any source, required careful screening. Workmen shoveled it thru a wire mesh sieve set up like an easle. Mortor for masonry and plaster for the walls had to be man-handled repeatedly. That was back-breaking labor with the shovel and the hoe. Mortor, bricks and plaster had to be heaved head high into the hod. Then the loads had to be hoisted high up ladders and deposited where the real artisans performed.

"Doc" also doubled over as janitor at the Baptist church. That called for carrying countless buckets of coal and ashes to and from the two big stoves that kept the little old brick meeting house warm. The sweeping and dusting that it took to keep the house of worship tidy was an added duty.

The source of this demonstrated strength and of his fictitious longevity was no secret. Bigsby attributed it to a diet of chicken, scientifically selected and acquired by what he called "lifting." Insofar as memory serves, this pious old prevaricator was never accused of pilfering by anyone except himself. With him, purloining poultry would not be classed as a crime, a misdemeanor, grand or petty larceny, or even a breach of etiquette. In his estimation, it was just the natural exercise of the inalienable prerogative of his race.

To enliven conversation with associates and sidewalk superintendents, Bigsby would spin fanciful yarns about his fictitious forays. He liked to imitate and to interpret the sounds that chickens make, ranging from contented clucks to agonizing squawks. He claimed

extensive knowledge regarding targets for his marauding tours. He professed to know who fed their flocks abundantly and who neglected them. This based his distinction between "quality folks" and "poor white trash."

"Doc" would infer that, by precept and example, he had acquired a doctorate in the theory and practice of selecting the delectable specimens on the darkest nights.

During Bigsby's tenure as the faithful janitor, the stalwart Rev. Stierwalt was the pastor. In stature, Stierwalt stood six feet and seven inches--maybe eight--and he took back not an inch of it. The sedate and dignified man of the cloth and the lowly janitor became firm friends. Of this, Bigsby was justly proud. In his imaginative way, he would explain that the good pastor, being so much man, was well endowed with, among other attributes, the proverbial ministerial affinity for chickens--the yellow-legged kind, on the plate--and seldom got enough.

This appetite, the old liar related, made them kindred souls. And, as an expression of his friendship and admiration, he agreed to take the preacher along on a foraging expedition. Bigsby would convey the impression that the difference between their heights--perhaps fourteen or fifteen inches, was about that many feet.

The parson's initiation into the art of chicken lifting, as Bigsby dreamed it up, was eminently successful. That is, except for the fact that the tall preacher purloined only lean, anaemic, tough and stringy undernourished roosters. From the same roost, he acquired for his personal consumption, plump pullets and nice fat hens. He had inspired the tall parson to demonstrate his marvelous ability to reach to the top branches. There, he found the birds with nervous dispositions--able and inclined to fly high to roost.

And, "Doc" would chortle that the learned clergyman, unschooled in the art of chicken lifting, never knew the difference. That, doubtless was true.



## Random Recollection

OF

April 28, 1960

STANLEY G. SMITH

## Back to Walnut Street

It looks like the post office will soon move back to Walnut street. Just how many and what locations it has occupied down thru the years, and who all have served as post master would require a lot of research. That information, plus four cents, would be worth a postage stamp.

More venerable observers of the local scene recall that at the time of the historic "Blue Store" fire that ruined the south side of the square, the post office was among the casualties. Occupants of living quarters on the east side of the square were ready to evacuate. They included Chas. J. Bischof--with his first piggy bank retrieved. Maybe bankers are born that way.

And, there is a tradition that, at one time, the office occupied a small frame building, facing Water street, just west of Stotlar drug store. The big white frame residence of J. Ben Bischof, with a prize bed of "Elephant Ears" on the lawn--the Home Lumber location--is as far back as this recollector works.

By hearsay, and from what might be termed archeology, one Walnut street location of the post office, in Harrison's administration, was in the general area of Hagler's furniture store. Remnants of pigeonhole shelving, discarded in the rear, formed an ideal livery stable for stick horses. The story is that Harrison Pursell was postmaster then. Harrison was the president. Sounds logical. How many years of postal service the progeny of Harrison Pursell's brother Grayell have performed would be hard to figure.

But, about the time that Grover Cleveland got his furniture hauled back to the White House the second time, had time to unpack, stretch the parlor carpet and put up a clothesline in the back yard, Reuben J. Rushing got the job and moved the office to his building. It was just north of the shady front yard of the Commercial hotel. The spot is now a part of the Medical Arts parking lot.

The Rushing regime was the last to combine the post office and a store. Along the north side of the lobby, Mrs. (Maggie) Rushing had a line of books, stationery and sundries. To discourage loafers from blocking the movement of merchandise over the counter, a long, thin iron rod was placed over it like a fence, but it was all swagged down by indolent leaner-oners. There were big key-operated lock

boxes for the more prominent patrons. The mill rented Box 20--at the back, and on the bottom row. Seems like it held a half-bushel of mail. How's that for going back?

Anyway, the country survived, McKinley was elected, and the good old Dr. H. P. Hunsinger--allegedly the first to spank this among many others--became postmaster. Then, the business was carried on at the corner of Walnut and Mulberry. When voting age was in the far distant future, the good doctor would make a youngster feel that success in the next election depended upon his cooperation. It made a little kid feel important to have the congenial old political fill his pockets with campaign buttons and listen to his views on the political situation.

A postmaster and a deputy sufficed then, Rural Free Delivery--Parcel Post, and the boom in mail order business, and, more duties placed on the postal service than most of us know about, have made many changes. The RFD may have started when Hunsinger was in office. City delivery came later, when R. B. Roe held the office.

Came a day when R. B. "Bob" Roe sent them a wire on election night, telling them to get themselves another boy. Then, the post office journeyed to the north side of the square--Kunze building first, then in what was the Murphy building, of Murphy Hall fame.

If the figures were available, it might be interesting to see how many hours it would take the post office as it is today to do all that, say Rube Rushing had to do to earn his monthly stipend.



# Random Recollection

OF

May 5, 1960

STANLEY G. SMITH

## The Best in Town

If all the barrels Mike Mentel hauled had been piled up, one above another, that stack would reach up to--nope, it would topple over. No statistics, but, down thru the years, he transported lots of them from the cooper shop to the mill. He exercised an exclusive franchise. It would be worthless now, Mike took pride in it as a supplement to his common ordinary teaming operations.

At least two generations of young and daring rascallions enjoyed the thrills of hooking rides on the celebrated wagon. Mike permitted the juvenil passengers on the empty trip to Grant and Kaskaskia streets. And, sometimes, invited youngsters to share the seat with him. It was a hard board bracketed precariously above the double-tree. There was no elasticity. Mike fit on it like a sack of wet sand. He warned the lads that, when he had a load on--barrels, that is--it was hazardous to hook on behind. But, even if he had possessed two good eyes, he could not see around the load. Kids that scattered when the empty wagon reached the shop would reappear mysteriously when the loaded wagon reached the mill.

Mike was a man of more than ordianry stature and brute strength. He had to be. When the barrels shot down the long slick skids that slanted downward from the shop loft to the wagon, their momentum would have slammed a frail man down on his hip pockets. Mike caught them like an old pro pivotman would take a lob pass from the centerline. And, he could lay them up much higher than even

he could reach with precision and ease.

This transportation career continued longer than horses ever live, but Mentel's team always looked the same. They lacked that "look of eagles." As style, action and disposition are inherent, they must have been of the same pedigree. They looked and moved like they might have been out of Siesta by Somnolence; he by Lassitude and he by Tranquility, the docile son of Morpheus out of Sleeping Sickness. They could hear the faintest murmur that sounded anything like whoa.

The harness that the patient, plodding horses wore looked like it was just about to fall apart. From the slobber encrusted bridle rings on back to the bespattered breeching there were worn and broken places that had been patched laborously with patches that had patches on them. It may be that the prevailing scale for hauling barrels was insufficient to cover costs of equipment replacement. That was when fifteen cents would buy a shave or a big shot of liquor. Mike shaved himself.

The old V-shaped wagon that creaked out its death rattle for many years had to have an origin. It was new once but who knows when? There is a faint impression remaining of seeing it, or of hearing someone tell of seeing it all decorated for a parade--coopers in it--one straddling his schnitzelbunk shaving hickory hoops--others going thru the motions of making barrels enroute.

Then it was without the battered look that became familiar. When the top rail would come apart at the joints and bulge too much, strands of haywire were entwined around it. The long slanting slats that formed the sloping sides and the ends were splintered and reinforced with sticks of any size that could be nailed or wired on. The well worn steel tires all would have parted company with the deeply dished wheels but for the continuous replacement of many yards of haywire. The era of the flour barrel as a popular container neared its end as did the life of the old wagon.

Somefelt inclined to make disparaging remarks about the appearance of the venerable vehicle. It had served Mike long and well. For his critics, he had a response. Few could justly equal it. No one could deny it. In his subdued, deep bass voice, Mike would answer: "I got the best \_\_\_\_\_ barrel wagon in town."



## Random Recollection

OF

May 12, 1960

STANLEY G. SMITH

Visiting the Advocate the other day awakened memories. It has issued from the northwest corner of the square so long the building bearing the paper's name has become a landmark. Old residents will recall that structure as the home of Schember's store--with assorted wooden kegs and barrels displayed on the sidewalk, and crocks and jars and chinaware on sale.

The Advocate was born on South Main street, along where Parker had his photograph gallery, north of the Roe Building, then so called, now home of Hobson Tire Shop. That was so long ago that this recollector would have taken little if any interest in it but for the fact that T. L. Baxter was a neighbor, and, his partner in the undertaking, one "Put" for Putnam Parker, was Archie Parker's older brother, and about the tallest man in town.

"Mister" Baxter, to us of the small fry in the area, was a man of importance because he had a newspaper--wore Sunday clothes on weekdays--slept, occasionally, in daytime and objected to the disturbances that a gang of little hellions can make. A dozen years or so later, "Tom" Baxter was this recollector's boss, and conferred upon this writer the questionable title of "A Space-filler from Hell."

No one who knew Baxter then, as a struggling son of an aged widowed mother, or Put Parker, son of the local photographer, would ever charge that either was born with the proverbial silver spoon in the mouth. Just how they sacrificed and saved enough to start The Advocate remains a mystery. Chances are that they were in deep water when they started in the face of long-established competition.

Without any appraisal or inventory of the plant in the beginning, it is an odds-on bet that they had a decrepit "G. Wash" man-power press and what was always called a shirt-tail full of type, worn down to the first nich. But, they struggled on.

Subsequent experience has implanted firmly the conviction that these enterprising young men possessed, in abundance, an essential intangible asset. It has been described as that which tennis racket makers need and that which the unclad gentleman portrayed on the front cover of the almanac displayed to the world for many years.

Without this necessary qualification, no doubt they would have responded to the urge to abdicate in the prescribed manner--extinguish the fire, by a specific process, lock the door, throw the key in the well, call the dogs and walk off.

But, they had what it took. Baxter was engaged in many printing and publishing ventures following that struggle. And, in his time, he was a past master of the craft; a whiz bang as a writer and skilled in all the angles of the task of operating country print shops. And they were many. He became nationally known as an official of the printers' union.

Parker soon drifted to St. Louis, where pastures were greener for good printers. Not too many years ago, a St. Louis printer recalled that Put and Archie Parker both attained wide recognition in the trade.

Hosea Strait, one of the staff of The Advocate when it was in its infancy, also advanced to the St. Louis field; became a part of a printers' supply business and prospered. Among other achievements, he is said to have perfected a labor-saving guage-pin that brought him royalty for years. Good trick.

And, as Advocate readers have been informed, Mrs. Gertie Fernel, then Gertie Hoge, was part of the initial staff. She was one of the first local---well, feminine compositors---son.

The skill required to set a lot of type by hand, essentially, means little in the trade today. A print shop foreman now contend with the stubbornness of a cantankerous one-lug gas engine, nor lace and splice long leather belts and hang an e-hang gaspipe for drive shafts to convey power from the little end to the presses. An all-round country printer in the so-called good old days had to be a master craftsman. Now, most of the skills so sorely needed then are now about as useful as the art of stacking wheat. And, it is well.

(Others active in the local press also merit mention--later.



## Random Recollection

OF

May 19, 1960

STANLEY G. SMITH

### HE WENT ABOUT DOING GOOD

The Advocate's sanctum sanctorum, or holy of holies, displays no bronze tablet to proclaim that "Hiram Williamson Worked Here." A plaque like that would be entirely meaningless to many. But, to such as knew Hiram here, when this century was young, and could observe his operations in the roaring twenties, and later, he is remembered as an exceptional personality. That states it mildly.

C. R. Davis was the editor and publisher when Williamson went to work on his first newspaper job. That must have been about the time the Rural Free Delivery mail wagons began their day-long struggles over muddy country roads. That opened opportunities for increasing circulation. Hiram was engaged to solicit subscriptions. Each new subscription, price \$1, netted Hiram a two-bit commission. The list grew rapidly. Davis supplied his sales representative with first class horse-and-buggy transportation. Hiram soon advanced into other publication duties; enlisting country correspondents; selling advertising and the like. In the standard success story tradition, Hiram married the comely daughter in the household of the boss, but that did not make him an heir to millions.

Murphysboro, and the daily newspaper field soon attracted Hiram, and, before too long, he moved on to Springfield. "State Printer Expert" was the title then of a job that covered contracting for the state's requirements in printed matter and related supplies. It might be just as well to omit the details, but, without undue threats or excessive coercion, the governor prevailed upon Hiram Williamson to accept the position, with its responsibilities and potentialities. That beat selling subscriptions.

Springfield has numerous printing plants and publishing concerns. In due time, Hiram became a power among them, as manager, part-owner and owner. Editor and publisher of The National Printer-Journalist was but one of the important positions he occupied.

When the state's newspaper people held their conclaves, Hiram always exercised a lot of influence in their deliberations. There came a time when newsprint prices advanced outrageously. The

squeeze was on the publishers and printers. Hiram worked out a co-operative buying program that worked out faster and better than any "trust-busting" court action could promise. The publishers all liked Hiram then.

The man that wrote the book about winning friends and influencing people might have been able to learn a little something watching Hiram in his continuous maneuvers. At a meeting of the press association, the Pearidge correspondent of the Bannister Switch Bugle felt that he was just as welcome and important as the publisher of a Peoria daily. Hiram made him feel that way.

When crowds flocked in to Springfield for important occasions, Hiram had the tickets when they were hard to get. If seats were at a premium, Hiram held the good ones, well up front, for friends that he knew were hard of hearing. He just knew how to help his friends.

Some might presume that there was just a touch of "gimme" in the warm handclasp and cheery greeting, and the many favors Hiram offered. Maybe so, at times. But, not always.

Old time disciples of Benjamin Franklin professed belief that, after half a century or so of faithful service in the print trade, in place of death they would be transformed into aged, wind-broken, bone-spavined, flea-bitten grey mules, and enjoy comparative ease with galled shoulders up in the collar and their splayed and splitting hooves pounding cobblestones as they hauled heavy loads up endless hills. Williamson believed they died just like people. Some died alone, and without funds. Some had no homes or next-of-kin to claim them.

In Oakridge Cemetery--burial place of Abraham Lincoln, mecca of many, including foreign dignitaries--there is a burial plot set aside for the remains of departed indigent printers. Unless and until all the space is taken, remains of pauper printers escape the potters' field. Hiram bought that plot for them. Dead paupers buy no printed matter.

Scopies 8/16/60 HWT





# The Mandolin Club of 1894

How many can you identify? This group portrait illustrates what "Men about town" looked like in the "Gay Nineties." Used as a cigar label by the Davison Drug store, it gained considerable circulation. The

late Elmer G. ("Cap.") Smith, the mandolin player with the mustache, left the picture in his effects. He had identified the individuals: (1) Will Rust--a tailor--worked for Wm. Brey when the shop was in the Mueller building--where Dr. Baker now functions. (2) Alex Peak--I. C. R. R. conductor--father of

the former Coach Peak. (3) Elmer C. Smith--then with Murphy-Wall bank--later of Murphysboro. (5) Ross Fitts--a merchant here for years, and later of Illinois, Mo. (6) Sherman S. Ritchie--Coal operator--fair official. (7) Chas. ("Mink") Terpenitz--Organizer and leader--sold music. (8) Thos. L.

Baxter -- Printer -- Newspaper man. (9) Arno Terpenitz -- brother of Adolph and Chas. -- later showed up with a dog-and-pony show. (10) J. Norton Taftee -- former postmaster. (11) Joe Niesing -- salesman -- brother to the late J. C. "Kid" Niesing. (12) "Chart" Roe -- later, Chas. H. Roe, dentist. (13) Ed-

die Cunningham -- electrician-combustion engineer. (14) Albert Davison -- druggist -- and connected with Davison Hotel--(now the Hammack building.) The extra instruments indicates that three more members may have failed to show up for the picture-taking. Elmer's notations would indicate that all 14 are now deceased.

Mrs. Elizabeth Shaw



